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"La nouvelle monadologie"

By Georgia Benedict

La nouvelle monadologie

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY
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Deuxième essai, ... " " 1875

Troisième essai, ... " " 1864

La science de la morale, ... " " 1869

L' année philosophique:

La critique générale (*L' infini, la substance, et la liberté*), ... For the year 1868

The Critique of Pure Reason, ... Edition of 1896
Max Müller's translation.

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LA NOUVELLE MONADOLOGIE.

A.

Introduction.

THE OLD CRITICISM.

Among the schools of thought prominent in France to-day that which is known as the neo-critical school must be given a leading place both on account of the definiteness of its philosophical position and the importance of those thinkers who adhere to it. Of this school the venerable M. Charles Renouvier is at once the founder and leader, and until very recently, following his example, the school devoted itself less to the direct establishment of its own doctrines than to their indirect proof through an exhibition of the ambiguities involved in all opposing views—ambiguities which, as it is claimed, presuppose the principles of the new criticism for their resolution. To the constructive system thus indirectly worked out a positive form has at last been given. With the assistance of a younger collaborator, M. L. Prat, M. Renouvier has summed up his philosophical position in a volume which he has named *La nouvelle monadologie.* Yet in many ways this new work—for it was published only four years ago—is more than a mere summing up and positive statement of the views long held by M. Renouvier. In some respects his opinions would seem at first to have altered radically, and it is only on a close reading that one perceives that the principles upon which *La nouvelle monadologie* is founded are the same upon which are based, for instance, the *Essais de critique générale.* No doubt this is due in great part to the alteration in the form of statement, and to the new prominence thus assigned to certain elements in the system which before

were not insisted upon. Yet something would seem to be owing to a real shifting in M. Renouvier's own interest. The change from the many gods of the *Essais*, for instance, of whom one was only probably the chief, to the creative consciousness of *La nouvelle monadologie*, does not seem a small one. But after all, as has been said, it is a change in form rather than in meaning.[1]

Still, in seeking to give an account of this system of thought and its presuppositions—as it is my intention to do—it will not be unfair, I think, if I confine myself mainly to the authoritative presentation which is furnished in this last work of the founder of the system.[2]

But before taking up *La nouvelle monadologie*, a word should be said as to the system of that thinker upon whose work the work of M. Renouvier is so largely based. The very name of this new school acknowledges its debt to the author of the first criticism—Emmanuel Kant. It is upon his conception of the nature of knowledge that its own is based, and only, indeed, as it seems to Renouvier that Kant has failed to abide by the standard he himself set up, does the disciple venture to depart from the teachings of his master. It is upon Kantian principles that Renouvier relies in his difference with Kant; and hence a brief outline of those principles will not be out of place as an introduction to this treatise.[3]

Presuppositions of Experience.

The statement that reasoning should be based upon the facts of experience we are prone to take as axiomatic. It is a truth that is more than obvious; it is commonplace, we say—and so held the great empirical school of philosophy in Kant's day. But in our day we take our axiomatic truth in a different sense than did the empiricists; for between their time and ours the problem which taxed the genius of Kant has been shown to lie hidden in the question, What is experience?

That the mind as knowing is a mere blank tablet upon which experience writes its inevitable record was a view which could find little favor in Kant's eyes, however ingeniously it might be presented, or however great might be the number of facts brought forward in its support. Facts supporting such a theory must surely be capable of another interpretation. And yet he could not but acknowledge the justice of many of the objections urged by the empiricists against the rationalistic doctrine of

[1] *Essais de critique générale;* 2me essai, *Traité de psychologie rationelle*, 1875, Tome III., pp. 245-268, especially p. 255.

[2] M. Renouvier has very recently published a new work dealing with the problems of metaphysics.

[3] *2me essai*, Tome III., p. 158; *La critique générale* (*L'infini, la substance, et la liberté*), p. 96, in *L'année philosophique*, 1868.

innate ideas, as that doctrine was commonly understood. It is as a synthesis of these opposing doctrines, then, that Kant presents his own theory in the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

One cannot reason directly from experience, he points out, for within experience reason itself has a part to play. Indeed, what we call experience is only possible on condition that it be the experience of a knowing—that is, an active—mind. If, then, we would discover the nature of experience, the first thing we must take into consideration is the part played within it by the activity of the mind itself; and before all else we must discover the nature of that activity. What principles of order and arrangement, we must ask, govern the working of the active mind? for such principles, if discoverable, would rank as the necessary presuppositions or conditions of all experience. Besides these, it is true, would stand as another condition *that which is arranged*—that which gives rise to sense perception; and in itself this would have to be considered as distinctly not a mental activity. However, since as not an activity of the mind this factor of experience cannot be defined at all, it may be neglected for the time being. It is merely the most brutal of brute facts, a thing which has to be assumed in order to render experience intelligible, even though, as unrelated, it is confessed to be altogether different from what it is in experience and knowledge. What the thing-in-itself is *in itself* is a puzzle. That it exists is a matter of intuition; how it exists, or in what manner it is able to affect the mind, is a question which Kant left in doubt. What it gives us is sense experience, sensation; but sense experience is not it. It is independent, moreover, of all mental representations, and hence is one source of the permanancy of the phenomenal world of sense. Because one of its roots is without me, so to speak, the thing I know, if it is momentarily not intuited or represented by me, still exists; and it exists as a phenomenon, for it is present to me—or, rather, for me—as a human being; it is discoverable to future search. The phenomenal world with its double source is as permanent as either of its sources. Phenomena have their own laws and ways of behavior; they are known to us, but their cause we cannot know. Disregarding this *datum*, however, we may set about the more hopeful task of discovering those principles by which the active mind is governed in its working, and by which it relates sense experience.

The Thing-in-itself.

Nor do we begin our labor in entire ignorance as to the nature of that activity we are about to analyze. We know already that our experience is ultimately a system, and, so

The Conscious Mind.

knowing, we may well infer that in supplying whatever principles of interpretation it may the mind acts according to a law or principle which is the source and unity of all the others. All our experience, that is, is known as related, whence comes the assurance of our own unity—and *vice versa*. But this knowledge is, after all, a blank knowledge. We may know that such a unity *is*, and we may define it as the unity of consciousness—even as we know that sense perception *is*, and define it as a *datum*. But in neither case is this knowledge in any proper meaning of the word. Between these two unknowables of sense-*datum* and conscious mind, therefore, is found the realm of experience, the world as known to us; and only as implied within that experience can the principles upon which it is constructed be discovered. Nothing outside of experience can be known by means of the reason; but, says Kant, within that limit "our critique must produce a complete list of all the fundamental concepts which constitute pure knowledge," *i. e.*, knowledge which contains no admixture of sense.[1] Such knowledge alone moulds experience, although there is much knowledge—and conceptual knowledge at that—which is not pure.

The Forms of Sense Perception.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, then, Kant attempts to discover what the mind adds to the given element in order to make experience possible. This he does by separating out from the mass of our experience those principles which are contributed by the mind itself. The sense-*datum*, of course, is a hopeless problem. We only know it as it appears in perception, or mental activity, and this very fact should serve to make clear to us that there is a subjective element within sense perception.[2] It becomes our business, therefore, to detect the "*a priori* forms of perception," and a moment's thought will serve to convince us that these must be identified with the conceptions of space and time. These, it is evident, are the presuppositions of all experience whatsoever. The whole world of our experience never appears save as in space and in time, and yet the fact that neither of these latter can be conceived as either finite or infinite shows that their nature is ideal—that they cannot be objective realities. Moreover, this is further and indirectly shown in the case of space, adds Kant, by the fact that the purely conceptual science of geometry can yet apply its results to the world of experience in a manner which would be impossible were not its conceptual space of one nature with all the space known to us.

[1] *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Müller's translation. 1896. *Introduction*. pp. 11-12, p. 16. Supplement IV., p. 716.

[2] *The Crit. of P. R.*, p. 19 seq.

But if these forms of perception are the first conditions of objective experience, the ordered form of experience as objectified is due to a further effort of mental activity;[1] and to the mind as so active in reducing the objective world to a system we may give the name of the understanding. If we ask, as we must, what the understanding *does*, we shall find that, first of all, it judges. Now at this point much of our task has been done for us, for from the days of Aristotle to our own men have been interested in the process of judgment, and the principles in accordance with which the mind acts in judging may be deduced from those methods of judgment which have been completely classified already through the labors of various logicians. With a very little rearrangement we shall find that, as described, the functions of thought in a judgment may be brought under the four heads of quality, quantity, relation, and modality, while each of these will have three subdivisions. To these subdivisions, then, the principles according to which the judging mind acts will exactly correspond, since these functions must be taken "completely to exhaust the understanding and comprehend every one of its faculties."[2] The twelve categories of the understanding, as Kant calls them—borrowing the term from Aristotle—are the categories of unity, plurality, totality; reality, negation, limitation; substance and accident, cause and effect, reciprocity; and possibility and impossibility, existence and non-existence, necessity and contingency. Of all these the category of cause and effect, which comes under the head of relation, is in some respects the most important—at least for our subsequent discussion. But all are of immeasurable value from the point of view of knowledge, for in them we have at last found the principles which give to our experience its unity and order. That experience upon which, as we acknowledged at the start, all our reasoning must be based, we now find to be itself the result of applying these categories of the understanding to the *datum* of sense; and hence experience cannot be taken as in anyway actually sensual. It is a synthesis, or, rather, experience itself is knowledge.

The Categories of Knowledge.

Still, even as so understood, experience is not free from contradictions.[3] A knowledge of the category of the categories is lacking, and hence we find ourselves involved in what Kant calls "antinomies of the pure reason"—conflicts between the different principles of judging which seem to arise from the very nature of knowledge itself. For instance, we seem able to prove that the world must have had a beginning in time and must be limited in space—and that the opposite of these is true; that all compounds are made

The Reason.

[1] *Crit. of P. R.*, pp. 58-69. [2] *Crit. of P. R.*, p. 66. [3] *Crit. P. R.*, pp. 344-377.

from simples while there are no simples; that freedom does and does not exist in the world; and that there is and is not a necessary being. Now that very understanding which in a sense creates, and which certainly makes use of the categories, is from another point of view the reason; and the reason, as primarily a function of unity, has for its aim the production of a unity which shall be ultimate. Yet however much this aim may express the nature of the mind, or of the self as expressed in the mind, it is an aim which goes beyond experience altogether, and to the fulfillment of which, in consequence, the categories of the understanding can give no help. Their persistent employment by reason for this purpose is, indeed, a most fruitful source of illusion, since "the unity of reason is never the unity of a possible experience."[1] It is, rather, that presupposition of knowledge which must remain forever unknown. If we choose, we may call it real, but—like the given *datum* which is the mind's starting-point—if real it is real in a sense not known to experience. Somehow or other, however, both these unknowables affect the world of knowledge—are, indeed, its dual source; and it is to their presumed nature that we must attribute those elements of our life which are in experience but not of it. The postulate of freedom which our moral life requires is such an element, for instance. From the point of view of knowledge it is a contradiction, since our experience—dealing always with objects or processes having a particular existence, that is, with phenomena—is arranged under the category of cause and effect, according to a basic principle of the knowing mind itself. But the real self, the unity which knows and feels and wills at once, which employs the categories of the mind to the sole end of bringing about unity—that activity is not to be conceived as limited by any mere category. Although we may never *know* whether the self is free, yet in practice we have to presuppose its freedom, and hence we may assume that freedom is proved in so far as the act of living can be said to prove it. Known it is not, for not even reason can know the unknowable—itself.

The Critical Criterion.

Three propositions may be said to sum up Kant's conclusions as to the nature of experience: 1. That nature is the work of the understanding; 2. That experience is of phenomena; 3. That nothing outside the limits of experience is knowable. From these three statements is derived that criterion by means of which the critical school judges all other systems of philosophy.

[1] *Crit. of P. R.*, p. 249.

B.

The New Monadology.

THE NEW CRITICISM.

It was as a disciple of Kant that Renouvier began his own philosophical career, but from the very beginning this French disciple questioned the legitimacy of at least one among the conclusions of his master. Why, he asked, should we admit as the foundation of experience a *datum* not only unknown but unknowable? And how, indeed, if our hypothesis requires us to define the thing-in-itself as in itself absolutely unknowable, outside of experience altogether, can we take it as the *datum* of experience, and say that it is known even as a presupposition of experience—as something given? In so saying, we contradict ourselves and the conclusion to which the whole process of the Kantian analysis has led us—the conclusion that knowledge has to do with phenomena, and phenomena only. Moreover, according to Kant, it is this *datum* which is ultimately real, and therefore reality becomes for him that which is not known and cannot be known—that which, for our experience and intelligence at least, does not exist. This is a theory that M. Renouvier finds it impossible to accept. As a foundation for phenomena, the thing-in-itself, he holds, is equivalent to just nothing at all, since, like the conception of non-being or nothing, it is that which may barely be thought of—if the name of thought maybe applied to inconsistent thinking.[1] For the thing-in-itself, just in so far as it is thinkable at all, appears in the shape of a relation among the other relations which make up our phenomenal experience, and thus is on a par with the idea of nothing, which *is* the idea of what *is not*—that is to say, that of which no idea can be formed. The whole notion of a *datum* as necessary to experience, says our author, is a fragment of that substantialistic

Assumptions of the New Criticism.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie;* ed. of 1899. p. 98.

fiction which has wrought such havoc among metaphysical theories from the days of the Eleatics down to our own, as still men have set themselves to the solution of the problem of being. It must be regarded as Kant's concession to the dominant metaphysical school of his day—a regrettable mistake on the part of the master. For it is evident that the formal conclusion of the criticism should be that if only phenomena exist for knowledge phenomena and their laws are the reality, since these laws must then be reckoned as themselves phenomena—phenomena which are constant, or which are constantly assembled or reproduced.[1] Viewed under this aspect, the question whether that which is, is a changeless substrate underlying all the varying shows of sense, or whether the endless variety of sense itself is being (and, if this last is true, whether being is one or many), takes on a new appearance. A fresh conception of the nature of things forces itself upon the thinker, a theory which may serve perhaps to coördinate the multitudinous facts of our experience after a fashion more thorough than the fashion of its rivals.

Phenomena the only Reality.

It is this new conception which M. Renouvier undertakes to work out and develope, according to the strict principles of the Kantian criticism, as by him interpreted. He will seek, so he declares, "nothing beyond that which takes place within the intelligence as an order of relations," nor will he admit "relations the definitions of which imply contradiction."[2] For if we take the world of our experience as the real world—disregarding all unverifiable hypotheses in regard to noumenal existence—we shall find that as so looked upon the world resolves itself into a system of relations, each so-called thing being definable, and only definable, in terms of its relation to something else. Thus while we may fairly retain and make use of the convenient word *substance* in our account of things, for us it can only be a term denoting any particular (*certain*) whole relatively to its parts, any complex of attributes, of properties, or of elements as relative to those elements, properties or attributes.[3] It cannot and must not be taken as something self-existent, but must be regarded, rather, as something which *is* only as it is *in relation*—only as it is itself a complex of relations. Having grasped this notion of substance, however, we may then ask ourselves which substance is the least complex, what is the simplest relation known to us;

Substance one with Consciousness.

Nature of the Substantial Universe.

Substance.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 153 seq. *3me essai* (*Les principes de la nature*), 1864, pp. 3-4. "*Il n'existe que des phénomènes pour la connaissance; les phénomènes et leurs lois, lesquelles sont aussi des phénomènes, mais constants ou constamment assemblés ou reproduits, sont la réalité même.*"

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 150.

[3] *La critique générale*, p. 3. *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 1.

and here we shall find that Kant's thorough discussion of the subject has practically settled this, our initial difficulty. For, as we have seen, Kant proved that as an ordered series—that is, as a system—phenomena are the work of the mind, and that each phenomenon as experienced is a mental product. But, to Renouvier's way of thinking, phenomena as experienced form the starting-point, and the universe itself not only appears to be but *is* an order of relations in consciousness. Hence it is evident that the most primitive, the least complex of all relations, must be that which is the presupposition of the phenomenal series, the relation which constitutes consciousness itself, as consciousness is known to us. This relation, however, it would be unfair to describe as a mental product, in the Kantian sense of that term at least. It may be better described as a *representation*, since it is essentially an apprehension of related elements *as related.* Consciousness, we may say, is for itself a representation within which the two factors of that which is represented and that which represents (the *représentatif*), may always be detected—two factors which we may call the object and subject of representation.[1] There is no conceivable relation more simple than this, and none more primitive. Here we are, as it were, at the birth of consciousness, and further back than this we cannot go, or, rather, know. Yet even when distinguished within the self-conscious mind these two factors are recognized as inseparable elements of one whole—nay, as being themselves alike in that each involves the nature of the other, since in reflective consciousness the subject is an object for itself, while the object as a representation in consciousness does not differ essentially from the thought which considers it, that is, from the thinker. However they may seem to differ they are not really different, but remain two aspects of one fact, two terms of a relation in consciousness, or, to speak more accurately, of the relation in which consciousness consists for knowledge. And this relation is likewise what is meant by being, for to this relation all others may be reduced, and on it they depend. It is the simple substance, the first complex which is implied in every complex of qualities known to us. Being and consciousness, as we know them, are one and the same, definable in identical terms and having identical meanings. This universe of ours, we may say, is the relation of subject to object within the subject.[2] In this relation consists its being. This *is* the the nature of the universe.

Simple Substance.

Consciousness as Relative and as Representative.

Subject and Object.

[1] *3me essai*, p. 11.

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 3: "*le rapport du sujet à l'objet dans le sujet.*"

Plural Substance.

As we study that ordered series of phenomena to which we give the name of experience, however, it becomes increasingly evident to us that the substance of the world is diversified to a most marvellous degree. The relations comprised within or springing from the original simple relation of subject to object are all but infinitely various. We are aware of substances rather than of substance, of beings as much as of being, and so much is this the case that we may well ask ourselves if substance should not be taken as originally plural—if there are not many simple substances? Should we not, if we would give an accurate account of our experience, assume diversity to be a primitive characteristic of the universe we know—the only universe which exists for us? It is true that the existence (*donnée*) of simple substance is implied by the existence of compound substances,[1] and that, as so implied, we have found it to be best defined as the relation of object to subject within a single representation; but now another aspect of this relation forces itself upon our attention. In spite of the essential unity of the two factors of representation, the object as a distinguishable factor within the representative relation is represented as something external to the subject. Consciousness (which is one with the simple substance of our description), does not find within itself the conditions of all the modifications which it experiences when it looks upon itself as an object. The subject feels that the object varies without its active participation and without any desire on its part.[2] It therefore conceives of the object as an "other" than itself; it assumes without question that plurality in the nature of things which we have just been considering as a possibility. Moreover, as the wider factor in that union in which representation consists, it conceives of the object in terms of itself—as another self, another subject, whenever it seeks actually to define what is meant by the object as another. That first primitive instinct of the human mind which thought of all nature as living, and, like itself, intelligent, remains its instinct still, and from the conceptions based upon this belief our later, more sophisticated notions derive their real meaning. Nor, indeed, is this instinct without its warrant, since, the object being one term of that relation in which consciousness consists, it cannot, as experienced, differ essentially from the thought which considers it—as has been pointed out already. For only as a representation in consciousness is the object known at all, and hence it can only be conceived of in terms of consciousness.[3] That of which we are actually aware, however, is not "the object" in the abstract, or even the

The Object: as Other.

As Another.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 1. [2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 6-7. [3] *3me essai*, p. 14.

object looked upon as another consciousness. Our experience, on the contrary, deals with objects, innumerable objects, many substances—so that, if we accept the assumption of plurality which is instinctively made by the self conscious individual, we must assume the existence of many consciousnesses. Nor is this so impossible an assumption; rather, it is an agreement with all that more important part of our phenomenal experience which we recognize as pertaining to us more directly, as being distinctively human. And in this connection we may add that, while it is the facts of our experience which must be our guide in any proposed explanation of things, yet those facts can be interpreted only as the facts of *our* experience, since even as philosophers we must view the world through human eyes.[1] It is an explanation of our universe which we desire primarily—not an hypothesis in regard to the nature of the beasts' world, nor some fantastic theory as to how things may appear to a consciousness unlike our own, though that consciousness be called the omnipresent consciousness of God. This being the case, we need not hesitate to adopt a presupposition of which every human being makes instinctive use—the theory of many existing substances, of a plurality of consciousness. Rather, having adopted this theory, let us see if those facts of experience with which we, as individuals, are not so directly concerned, may not find a consistent explanation in accordance with this view, however much at first they may seem to come in conflict with it.

Diversity of Objects.

For that matter, we are not pioneer explorers in this division of the realm of thought. The view of nature which we have proposed to adopt would resemble in many respects that stated by Leibniz in his *Monadology*, for instance—to name but one in a long line of philosophical predecessors. Indeed, in this particular case, the coincidence of thought is sufficient to admit of our borrowing a term or two from out Leibniz's store, should we so desire. The word "monad," for example, as used to designate the single consciousness, is an expression we should find both accurate and convenient. Let us therefore, like honest thieves, appropriate it.

The term "Monad."

But having once accepted substance as plural, a new difficulty immediately arises. As we have said, although the monad does not believe itself to be entirely self-determined, it nevertheless recognizes the fact that its external relations always exist with, and, as it were, *in* an internal relation—that there is "nothing in the modifications proper to one monad which, viewed analyt-

The Objective System: Monadatic Relations.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 152-155. *3me essai*. pp. 193-196.

ically, involves the reasons of the modifications of another."[1]

The Theory of Interaction.

Yet these objective representations are capable of entering into the self-related whole of consciousness. It must be, then, that the monads themselves form a system; and the nature of their relations within this system will be the next problem the solution of which we must seek among the facts of our phenomenal experience. One theory, at least, our previous discussion has left no room for. Although consciousnesses may be assumed to be many, the representations within each consciousness form in themselves a complete whole, a system of relations which finds expression in the sentiment of self-hood, and which excludes by its own nature any notion of interaction among the monads.

The Notion of Cause.

All relations may be finally reduced to that one inseparable relation which constitutes substance for us, and which is complete in itself and to itself. For this reason the relation of causality, which we recognize as forming part of that system of relations in which consciousness consists, cannot be taken to imply any interaction between the monads.[2] Indeed, an analysis of the relation of causality leaves us in the end only an elementary correspondence between two facts—that, the one being given, the other always accompanies or succeeds it. And this correspondence is itself a fact. That to which experience bears witness is not causality, as that relation is ordinarily conceived of, but the succession of phenomena. In the more usual acceptation of the term, it is true, there attaches to the idea of a cause—and especially of a cause as efficient—the notion (*imagination*) that something is transported from it, and acts in a way which modifies some other thing in the situation to which it is transported. This, however, we can only reckon as the vainest of vain imaginings. Nevertheless, so obstinate is this notion that it will be worth while for us to examine more closely those cases to which this fictitious representation may be applied. Observing the various circumstances in which experience makes us aware of a constant relation of sequence among phenomena, we shall find that these cases are three in number. We have, first, the case where movement is communicated by movement; second, the reciprocal relation of the production of thought and of movement, with the communication of the thought of one spirit to another; and, third, all the sorts of causality which the connection (*enchaînement*) of natural phenomena exhibits. Let us examine these three cases in their order, one by one.

The Three "Cases" of Causality.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 18-19.

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 18-21, 38-39, Note 24, etc. *1er essai*, p. 213 seq. *3me essai*, pp. 109-113, etc.

Now if we analyze the notion of causality which enters into the case where movement is communicated by movement, we shall find that it is made up of ideas of contact, shock, attraction, etc., all of which ideas are drawn from *our* sensations or affections and transferred to the relations of bodies in movement. We think of the latter—sub-consciously, it may be—as if they were alive and conscious; we presuppose in them the inseparable relation of subject to object which we know in ourselves; but, for that very reason, we cannot assume that there is a transition of any kind involved in physical movement. Instead we have varying modes and forms of representation. Then, in the second of our cases—where movement follows thought, and thought is communicated by means of movement—the movement involved is always physical, and hence this case also assumes the aspect of a representative relation; our knowledge does not go beyond the fact of the thought of a movement being succeeded or accompanied by the perception of that movement, and the consequent employment of some movements as signs representing our ideas. As for the third case of causality, the sequence is here so complex that we really are never able to say that any one natural phenomenon is the cause of another, in the transitional sense of cause. Cause becomes multiple, and so vanishes. The whole fiction of causal transition, indeed, it will now be evident, is only a mode of representation, symbolic of succession so far as succession is determinate. If we must give a name to such an elementary relation between facts as that the one being given the other always accompanies or succeeds it, it would be better to call that relation a harmony, or even, after Leibniz's fashion, a *preëstablished* harmony, seeing that if one considers all possible cases in which it may be observed the relation resolves itself into nothing less than the order of the world represented in its integrity as a collection (*faisceau*) of causes and effects related each to the other in space and in time; while, moreover, this order is for us a given fact (*une donnée*), and must remain so, however far our knowledge may be able to extend itself.[1]

Preëstablished Harmony.

However, although a *datum*, this order is not to be defined as an unknowable *datum*. On the contrary, it is distinctly a *datum* of consciousness, and hence capable of being fully comprised within it—that is to say, it must be taken as forming a complete, self-related system. The totality of the relations making up the world-order is not to be thought of as not to be grasped by thought. But if such is its nature, the world-order can

Finitude of the System.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 21—"*dans l'ensemble et dans la suite de tous les cas possibles où elle s'observe*," etc.

scarcely be described as infinite, since to relate is necessarily to limit. Therefore we may say that the order of the world, inasmuch as it is for consciousness a totality of relations, and as not for consciousness is not at all, is only to be conceived of as finite. The system of monads, in short, by virtue of its existence as a system, must be taken to be made up of a definite, although vast, number of monads. And this conclusion is reinforced by the consideration that only within such a system would harmonious arrangement be possible. Within a finite system alone might monads be held without contradiction to be arranged in some such a hierarchy as Leibniz imagined.

But, it may be said, is not the world order an order in space and in time, and is it possible to think of these, or of number itself, as limited? Are not these very ideas, on the contrary, the source from which we draw that notion of the infinite which you have so summarily set aside as inconceivable? To stigmatize any conception as inconceivable appears to be a reckless proceeding; and if it is your meaning, rather, that the conception of the infinite is unintelligible, we may fairly demand a further statement of your reasons for arriving at a conclusion which—at first sight, at least—does not seem to contradict those facts of our phenomenal experience upon which you profess to base your system of philosophic thought.

Let us, then, undertake a more thorough inquiry into the nature of this conception of the infinite—a notion, it will be remembered, which lies at the base of the first of the Kantian antinomies, and in resolving which, therefore, one ground for the positing of the unknowable thing-in-itself will be swept away.

As we have seen, the idea of causality is a mode of representing the determinate succession of phenomena; and what is to prevent us from thinking of this succession as going on "forever," as it is phrased? Nothing whatever, it may be answered, save the simple fact that in so proceeding it would cease to be determinate, and hence would cease to be at all. For succession is itself a relation—one of those phenomenal laws which are themselves phenomena; and a relation which was not definite would not be a relation. An indeterminate succession is neither a matter of experience nor an inference from it, but an *abstraction*, without content and made without warrant. The indeterminate, we must say, is that which is not for knowledge, and so that which is not for experience, while the infinite is necessarily the indeterminate.[1] Space, time and number, therefore, being all modes of relation, are equally in themselves limited and finite.

Space, Time and Number.

[1] *La nouvelle monadology*, pp. 98-101.

It is from their abstract forms that the notion of the infinite is drawn—forms which, when we come to examine them, are seen to have no meaning. One does not go on counting for the mere sake of counting, for instance. One always counts—that is, relates —*something*. The very notion we have of number is of number as a determined, measured quantity, and "infinite number" is a phrase without any actual significance whatever. Speaking in a strict sense it is really inconceivable, although it may be called unintelligible, if one prefers. "The infinite," says M. Renouvier, "is a contradictory concept, so far as all that which is actually given is concerned. It can be conceived legitimately only as the idea of an indefinite possibility, open to thought, but of which the realization implies completion and limitation. As an object of knowledge the world must be represented as constituted by related phenomena—by the groupings and functions of phenomena, by laws. For all intelligible being is a function and a law."[1] The world for knowledge, then, is limited and definite, and since knowledge—or, rather, the known—is one factor in that dual relation which is existence, we may say that the world *is* limited and definite, thus disposing of the first of the Kantian antinomies and of the others in so far as they depend upon the first. Also, since we have already decided that the world is a system of monads, we may conclude finally that the universe of our conception is constituted by a very great but perfectly definite number of monads related one to the other and each to all according to discoverable principles which may be grouped together under the name of a preëstablished harmony.

"Finite" and "Infinite."

Nature of the Universe.

But, substance and consciousness being one, according to the terms of our definition, out of such a universe of related consciousnesses how are we to get the varied world of our experience, in which the inorganic, the unconscious, seems to play so large a part? We can get it, answers Renouvier, because the inorganic is a mere seeming, which does not really exist. The conception of the unconscious, like that of the infinite, is an abstraction, experience acquainting us only with the less conscious, with compound substances of varying degrees of organization. These, according to our hypothesis, are to be considered as made up of monads or simple substances; but in what sense can they be held to be so made up? It does not seem to me that Renouvier has rendered his own position clear at this point. For having defined the substance of our immediate experience—compound substance, that is—as "any particular whole considered relatively to its parts," he goes on to state that these parts may be supposed

Compound Substance.

[1] *La critique générale*, p. 178.

The Unconscious.

to be of one nature with the whole whose parts they are; that "a substance can be considered as a *quantity*."[1] "In that case," he adds, "if one considers the compound substance as actually given, and the parts that one distinguishes in it as given likewise, and not as simple possibilities for thought, these partial subjects will themselves form a whole or determinate number."

Quantity and Quality.

But how would the compound substance thus "considered as actually given" differ from the monad or simple substance viewed quantitatively? A monad, indeed, as M. Renouvier insists with even wearisome iteration, has no parts—not being extended in space; and this he appears to regard as an absolute distinction between simple and compound substances.[2] Nevertheless, since space itself is to be reckoned merely as one of the monad's most necessary methods of representation—in fact, as an intuition—it is hard to see how the essential unity of the monad invalidates the supposition that, viewed quantitatively, it itself may be what is meant by a compound substance. For that matter, what have parts, aspects of substances considered from a quantitative point of view, to do with space or spatial notions? Or if a quantitative point of view necessarily involves spatial determinations, would this mean more than that the monad, when it considers itself or other monads quantitatively, views them under a spatial aspect, and, in so far as this imperfect view goes, as having parts?[3]

This is certainly not the notion of M. Renouvier, however. Compound substance itself is, of course, only a representation, but, so far as I am able to understand him, he seems to hold that compound substances are, or are represented to be, made up *spatially* of monads or simple substances. At any rate, the distinguishing mark of a compound substance is that it is extended in space, while the monad is not. It is very possible, of course, that the intricacies of a foreign tongue and the metaphorical language used by the philosopher have deceived me in this matter; yet I cannot give any other interpretation to those passages where the way in which compound substances are composed of simple substances is explained. Every compound substance is, he says, a group, or, rather, an organism of monads ruled by some "central monad." This central monad is thus

Central and Serving Monads.

"the director of a little world, the preëstablished harmony of which includes all relations of cause to effect, so far as these are predetermined"—that is, so far as the action of one monad appears to result from the action of another or others, whether

[1] *La nouvelle monadology*, p. 2. [2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 2, 12, 102-106.
[3] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 46.

these are included within the unity of the smaller system or, with it, are part of the wider system of the universe.[1] But, as the analysis of cause has already shown us, this predetermination is no more than an appearance, and, in the last analysis, "every phenomenon is given within the simple monad, whatever may be the state of the compound substance of which it is an element, and of whatever phenomena of space or movement this compound substance may be represented as the seat.[2] This seems to mean that certain monads are represented by certain others as elements or parts of a compound substance; and that the nature of things (as a system) is such that the representations of the monads thus assumed to be elements agree with the representations of the central monads. Indeed, there is nothing to prevent a monad from representing itself as a part of a compound substance, although this is by no means a necessary procedure on the part of every serving monad, as M. Renouvier names those monads which are ruled—that is, represented to be elements of compound substances.

Matter: its Nature and Office.

According to the law of preëstablished harmony, the degree of control exercised by a central monad over any serving monad would vary with the nature of the compound substance of which that serving monad might be represented as an element. Not all, for instance, are organized after a fashion which permits them to be brought directly or indirectly under the control of a central monad—at least, of a central monad of the human type. Yet this type is the highest, or the most individual, known to us, and —to anticipate for a moment one of M. Renouvier's conclusions— it is a presupposition of all experience that "organization in every degree exists in order to bring about the greatest individuation." If this is the case, however, such instant control as the central monad of a human organism exercises over the serving monads composing that organism would appear to be the type or ideal of the control which every central should exercise over every serving monad. The only "dead matter" which should find a place within a reasonable world would be that "constituting certain stable mediums which may be used in common by living beings for purposes of communication," says our philosopher.[3] But the universe of our experience is far from conforming to this ideal; and hence the conclusion follows inevitably that something is out of joint within it. Too many of the most important phenomena are neither subject to the human will nor to intelligent direction. The serving monads whose actions and

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 18. [2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 76.
[3] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 52.

reactions make up that totality of compound and unorganized substances which we call matter do not directly perform their office—are of no immediate service to the personal monads.[1]

The Origin of Substance.

Must we conclude, then, that the universe is unreasonable? It certainly appears to be so, and yet we may hardly venture to accept such a decision, since, as we have seen, it is reason or consciousness that constitutes the universe.

Consciousness as Creative.

Yes, it may be said, it is consciousness or reason that constitutes the universe *for each one of us*; but may it not be that the universe of monads is not so constituted? May not the nature of the universe of monads differ essentially from that of the single monad which is the source of our experience? For each one of us the world is the product of reason; but is reason the source of the world? Most certainly, answers Renouvier, it is the source of our world, and we know no other. Neither, for that matter, can we conceive of any other origin of things than that which is found in reason. This is the only creative power experience makes known to us. Nor can we think of the universe as without an origin; for, as we have seen, it is made up of a determinate though vast number of monads, and we know that no one monad can either come into or go out of being save through creation or annihilation. What we ordinarily mean by "coming into being"—the composition of parts—is impossible to a monad, the nature of which is essentially unitary, although it may be known only as a constant relation of subject to object; and equally, of course, decomposition must be a stranger to it. Moreover, since the parts of the system of monads are not quantitative, nor the system itself a quantitative system, we may in this case argue from the nature of the parts to that of the whole, and say that it, too, must have had a beginning.[2] For it is only by virtue of an abstraction that any monad is thought of as forming a *part* of a system at all. As a matter of fact, each monad *is* the system—that is, each monad reflects within itself, according to its degree, the entire phenomenal series, which could not be unless all the monads had had not only an instantaneous but a simultaneous origin. And the only origin of which we are or can become aware is an origin for and through consciousness. Nor can we conceive of the creative consciousness to whose activity is due the universe as differing, save in degree, from the consciousnesses known to us. Through the latter only may we grasp at the nature of the former. "The definition of the first cause must be drawn from the laws of the spirit or from those of the world, since in following any other method it would

The Idea of Personality.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 472.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 17.

be sought for outside of the relative," says M. Renouvier. "The laws of the world are, however, the laws of the spirit . . . and this being so . . . the idea of the first cause can only present itself as the idea of the qualities characteristic of a person, but carried to the highest point of perfection conceivable."[1] It remains, then, for us to discover the "qualities characteristic of a person"—those "laws of the spirit" which are the laws of the world.

The Neo-Critical Categories.

According to Kant, it will be remembered, the forms under which the intelligence grasps or relates phenomena may be empirically determined. He found them to correspond, for instance, with the forms of judgment. Renouvier, on the contrary, starting with his primary relation of subject to object within the subject, a relation which, as known, he has already defined as representative, naturally terms the categories or forms of knowledge modes of representation. He finds that they are nine in number. The first and most important is the category of *relation* itself, from which all the others spring. Then follow *number*, *position*, *succession*, *quality*, *becoming* (*le Devenir*), *causality*, *finality* and *personality*.[2] Nor does he think that more are possible, as these suffice to determine the object completely. But, as he is most careful to point out, the action of every one is necessary in order to determine any object. "Without the first five of these categories no representation could subsist," he declares. "Were a thing not determined relatively to other things; did it not imply number as a part of some whole or a whole made up of parts; had it neither directly nor indirectly a place nor an epoch; and if one could not qualify it by arranging it under some kind—that thing would cease to be, or, rather, it would never have existed for us." And the remaining categories, while not so immediately applicable to every objective representation, are, nevertheless, inherent in every one; for, "in order to represent to ourselves any phenomenon whatever reflectively and with system, we must relate it to the personality within us; run over a series of changes of our person; exercise the will, which is a cause; and, that we may do this, propose to ourselves some end to be attained."[3] The human consciousness, then, appears as a centre or meeting-point of the categories—and that is exactly what Renouvier calls it. Man, he says again, may be known by the name of one category or another, but "the function we call 'man' embraces them all—is a certain function of all the functions given in knowledge." To discover the

Their Nature. Number, and Mode of Action.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 152.
[2] *Essais de critique générale, 2me essai*, Vol. I., pp. 2-3.
[3] *Essais de critique générale, 2me essai*, Vol. I., pp. 3, 4, 7.

Qualities characteristic of a Person: Intelligence.

qualities characteristic of a person, therefore, we must study the manner of that functioning. Now, unfortunately, we find that the "functions given in knowledge" do not work together harmoniously, or, rather, that their harmonious working would seem to be impossible from the point of view of the intelligence or knowing mind—in which case nothing is left us but to trust to the witness of the consciousness itself, as a whole, and not to the contradictory testimony of the intelligence.

Freedom; Cause *versus* Number.

What is, perhaps, the most noteworthy of the conflicts between the categories has already been considered in another connection, but it may here be taken up again, as its solution exhibits one of the most marked among the characteristics of the human consciousness. The immediate interpretation of the category of causality, we know, results in the hypothesis of an infinite regression, thus contradicting the category of number—an infinite number being unimaginable. As has been seen, however, the notion of cause is really a mode of representing the determinate succession of phenomena, and, as such, it appears in contradiction with itself. Its witness we rejected, therefore, but left its authority as a mode of representation unquestioned. Now the soul—the consciousness—feels itself to be free in its action. It regards itself as moving by itself, so to speak; and with this feeling the causal mode of representation comes into direct conflict. One representation is pitted against another—and which are we to accept?—for here knowledge stands opposed to knowledge; and the intelligence is not able to give its full allegiance to either view, though it may, perhaps, have a choice between them. In other words, we find that here knowledge has reached its limit and rests itself upon something the authority of which is greater than its own—namely, *belief*. For when the consciousness turns to consider, not the nature of its processes, but what it itself is, it views itself as a threefold unity, a one in which the three elements of intelligence, passion and will may be distinguished; and in virtue of that unity it regards itself as free. Such is the type which the soul bears within itself, and in conformity with which it conceives of all things. Liberty such as we may admit, says Renouvier, is "that characteristic of the reflective and voluntary human act in accordance with which consciousness posits the motive and the agent as strictly united and identified with itself, while affirming that other acts than the former one would have been possible at the same time.[1] That

Belief. Consciousness as a Threefold Unity.

[1] *Essais de critique générale, 2me essai*, Vol. I., p. 73: "*La liberté que nous pouvons admettre est ce caractère de l'acte humain, réflechi et voluntairé, dans lequel la conscience pose étroitement unis le motif et le moteur identifiés avec elle, en s'affirmant que d'autres actes exclusifs du premier étaient possibles au même instant.*"

is, consciousness appears as itself a creating activity, not motived, but a motive, and as such determining the course of events. Indeed, if this, the true nature of consciousness, be kept in mind, the problem of human freedom loses its meaning, says our author, for the two formulas, "the preponderating motive determines the will," and "the will is its own motive," may then be reduced to propositions identical in meaning—namely, that "the state composed of passion, intelligence and will of which the representation of a motive judged capable of determining a subsequent act forms a part, effectively determines that act," and that "the act composed of will, intelligence and passion of which the representation of a state judged to be the consequence of that act forms a part, effectively determines that state."[1] The problem disappears as soon as the will is recognized to be inseparable from the whole consciousness, the freedom of which is assumed as a matter of course, although that freedom cannot be demonstrated, since demonstration belongs to the province of the intelligence and its categories. But, though that which is characteristic of the consciousness as a whole can be known to the intelligence only *a priori*, as a fact, even so, and from the point of view of the intelligence, liberty appears to be the more probable thesis of the two. It is a fact of experience. As Renouvier phrases it: "Man believes himself to be free; that is, he busies himself in directing his activity, whether interior or exterior, as if the movements of his consciousness, and consequently those acts and events which depend upon them, were not merely a function of their antecedents (any given conditions and circumstances whatsoever), were not determined entirely in advance, but could vary through the effect of something in himself which nothing could predetermine—not even that which he himself was before the last moment which preceded the action."[2] And to this belief the determinists oppose only the theory that the lack of complete knowledge produces the illusion of freedom. Now, of the conflict between the categories of cause and number enough has been said already. Let us, rather, consider a point in which experience seems at first sight to support this theory of the determinists, in the results which are drawn from statistics. For experience has shown that certain events which one would suppose to be largely a matter of chance, or to follow upon the free action of individuals, occur with a regularity amounting to that of a law, although the principle governing that regularity has not yet been discovered, as the determinist would say. We seem to be face to face

Necessity *versus* Liberty.

[2]*me essai*, Vol. I., p. 72.

[2] *1La science de la morale*, 1869, Vol. 1, pp. 1-2.

with a case where our ignorance produces the appearance of freedom. Hence if it be driven from this, its strongest empirical position, the claim of determinism to a more complete agreement with facts than its opponent can show may be taken as disproved. But upon what do these statistical results themselves rest, it may be asked, except that principle of large numbers which has as its presupposition that certain contrary future events may be equally expected? That is, all that we know empirically is that these contrary events must be supposed to have an equal possibility of production—which is to presuppose indeterminism.[1] Still, however probable the libertarian thesis may appear to be it can never become a matter of knowledge. It must remain a mere *belief*, or, rather, since the adjective might seem to detract from its importance, it must be taken as the basis of experience itself, the assumption upon which knowledge is founded. Certainty belongs only to that which may be demonstrated, may be related within the phenomenal series; it belongs to the simple perception of simple phenomena, and beyond such simple perception experience may be said to depend, not upon our knowledge, but upon our belief. Free choice is at the back of our convictions. We know because we choose to know, believe because it is our will to believe. We compel experience, as it were, to tell us that which we desire to know, that which will accord with our own beliefs. Upon this obstinacy of ours the advance of science depends. We deliberately adopt certain motives as our own, as determining our judgment, and refuse to accept as valid any aspects of experience which may seem to contradict them.

Belief the the Basis of Experience.

What justifies us in this method of procedure is the fact that the realm of experience as known—that is, as viewed from the standpoint of the intelligence—fails to furnish a complete explanation of itself. The "antinomies of the understanding" are not to be solved through adherence to the critical rule, "to seek nothing beyond that which takes place within the intelligence as an order of relations, and never to admit relations the definitions of which imply contradiction."[2] In certain cases we must make a choice, and we must ask, therefore, what the motives are which in those cases influence the consciousness. Upon what beliefs does it base its experience? What is its guarantee of certitude? "For a reflective man," asserts M. Renouvier, "the principal means of determining the judgment are drawn from the logical relations of ideas, from relations of utility, . . . or from moral

The Criterion of Belief.

[1] *Essais de critiqué genérale, 1er essai.* p. 587 seq.

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie,* p. 150.

relations."[1] But if our end is to obtain a guarantee of certitude, the first of these means must be given up, since logic only demonstrates one proposition by supposing others to infinity, or else must depend upon something undemonstrable. The judgment of the useful, again, has its certainty subordinated to the truth of an hypothesis. Its consequence is an act, the object of which is to realize a means by which some end may be attained; and that which is a means to attain an end, some good, we may never know as *rationally good* in itself. Therefore, our ultimate test must depend upon the moral relations—and so, indeed, it does. We ask of a proposed explanation of experience if it conforms, after a careful examination, to what we conceive to be our moral aim or destination; and that moral aim which expresses the inmost demand of our consciousness, when viewed from the individual standpoint, and that alone, is happiness.[2] The demand of the individual consciousness, as individual, is for an assured continuity of pleasures; so that good itself may be formally defined as "that which is desired." It would appear, therefore, that the qualities which must be supposed to be most characteristic of a person, are intelligence (with its categorical mode of procedure), freedom of action, and the desire for happiness; and if these be carried to the utmost conceivable point of perfection, and ascribed to a cause assumed to be the source of the world, it follows that such a cause could not have given rise to a world wholly or partly evil, since evil, moral or physical, is the very source of all sorrow.

The Desire for Happiness.

The world of monads as well as the world of the single monad having its source in reason, then, the nature of its origin furnishes no explanation of the contradictions we find within our phenomenal experience. On the contrary, it does but make our trouble deeper, for we are compelled to think that the universe of our experience is not that which was due to the action of the first cause. It would seem to be another, or, perhaps, the ruin of that original creation; and it is the world of our experience that we desire to understand. Yet if this universe be the ruin of a former harmonious world, its contradictions and evils will no longer seem so strange to us, nor will the attempt to find a reason for if not in them appear utterly hopeless. Our problem will be, rather, to determine the source and nature of the first world's ruin, to explain the relation of the two worlds to each other and to their common end—the end of creation. Let us see, then, where the hypothesis of a ruined world will lead us.[3]

THE WORLD OF EXPERIENCE.

Unreason in the World.

[1] *La nouvelle monadology*, p. 253. [2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 256-261.

[3] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 60-68. 464. etc.

The Summum Bonum.

The end of the empirical creation from the standpoint of the individual monad, has already been determined. It is happiness, and happiness in the sense of an assured continuity of pleasures. The monad, however, does not exist to itself alone, but, as we have seen, must be supposed to be an integral part of an organized system. Happiness, the welfare of the individual, may still be the end, but only of the individual as a member of a society, since only in society can be found the happiness which man seeks as an intelligent being. His demand for an assured continuity of pleasures becomes, in consequence, transformed in shape and nature. The idea of good changes into the idea of the just, or justice, when he recognizes that the good of one has no more reason of fulfillment than the good of another. And in this last idea we find the final criterion by which the representations of experience are judged by us. Our ultimate criterion is the idea of justice, which finds its best abstract expression in Kant's categorical imperative. So that we must take the perfect individual in a perfect society as the end of the creation, and its beginning likewise.

Justice.

The World of Reason.

From out the confusion of a morally chaotic world reason has formed a universe of its own, and has deduced from the principles thereof the moral ideal of perfect justice. But in the world of our experience this ideal remains a mere empty formula, an aim impossible of fulfillment, a form to which no content can be given. The moral law is a law which applies, not to this world in which we find ourselves, but to that ideal world whose natives we are and from our place in which we have fallen. As such it makes its claim upon us, as such it is recognized by us as obligatory, and as such it involves us in a hopeless warfare with ourselves and our surroundings. Such is the nature of things as known to us that no man may live in perfect obedience to this law. Death, and a cruel death, would be the penalty exacted from the man who sought in thought and word and deed to be perfectly just—even were he a man so wise as to know what, in this world of confusion, should be counted as perfect justice. And the men willing to be obedient unto death to the law of life have been few within this world of ours, nor have they always been reckoned among its saints and heroes. Yet the nature of mankind is such that while the world exists men will seek to conform it to the human ideal. The struggle would be eternal were this world to last forever.[1]

We have found that the universe must be supposed to have its origin in reason, while experience teaches us that the world

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 266, 436.

we live in is not a world that reason would create. Let us attempt, then, to form some notion of the world as reason made it—of the first perfect creation and of the position man held therein. In this present world of ours too many laws act under conditions other than those of their first establishment—which was for man.[1] The mere physical conditions of life are such that the absolute justice we demand as a right belonging to our natures is an impossibility. Injustice, it would seem, is at the very heart of the physical universe. We find primarily a great mass of matter gathered together in a few detached bodies of varying size and separated by disproportionate distances. Because of this, gravitation acts unequally, the production of heat and light is concentrated, and all the laws of mechanics are forced into an appearance of irregularity. Now, in order to account for these facts, experience has led us to form the "nebular hypothesis"—that is, to believe in a cosmic epoch during which matter, before widely disseminated, gradually concentrated itself, and became incandescent. But how explain the origin of the nebula? "The philosopher," says M. Renouvier, "may think either that this cosmic revolution was the ruin of an anterior world, or that it was only the preparation for another, the antecedents of which, therefore, would belong exclusively to the matter and forces displayed in the nebula. . . . But the first will be our theory if we believe that the primitive world must have been a perfect world as well. We should then place before the idea of the nebula—which is the idea of a state of entire disorganization—the idea of a system entirely and harmoniously organized."[2] We need not abandon the main outlines of the plan which our present world presents to us; but we may conceive of a new distribution of its material mass which would put things on quite a different footing. If matter, before the revolution which destroyed the former world and formed the nebula, was not distributed in masses like the sun and planets, but was of nearly uniform density, attraction acting in such a medium would not obey its present law—would not act upon bodies in inverse proportion to their mutual distances—but would affect each body approximately in direct proportion to its distance from a common centre, supposing those bodies to be themselves confined within a certain limit of density. For, since the first elements formed by the union of monads differ in density, we must suppose that even elementary bodies have their specific weight.[3]

Physically.

Such a medium as we have imagined, however, would have to

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 472. [2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 473-475.
[3] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 486-489.

be of a nature to satisfy at least three conditions fulfilled by the actual world, and fundamental for a superior organism and its life of relation. Motion must be possible within it; it must be capable of surrounding a living being and furnishing to it the elements of its constition and physical actions; and it would have, besides, to be able to transmit to such a being the action of natural forces in a vibratory form. Now, a ponderable medium formed of an elastic fluid the density of which should be appropriate to that of organized bodies would satisfy all of these conditions, for it would be quite capable of transmitting vibrations; it would doubtless furnish the greatest facilities for either voluntary motion or rest; and, if we supposed the only unorganized matter in the world to be that which, circulating from body to body, was assimilated by the organisms, or which, becoming free, might again be similarly employed, there would be nothing to prevent us from considering such a primitive medium as a reservoir of such material elements. For the preëstablished relations would insure that none of this matter would ever be unemployed, and only the specific form of the individual need then be held to be immortal. For individual existence, in such a case, would not be an evolution. The body would not need to increase or decrease, but would simply maintain itself under its fixed form through the system of mutual exchanges.[1]

But in such a universe, through the very completeness and harmony of its organization, the forces within the control of the single individual would be greater than it is easy to imagine. All the laws of nature would work at his will, for they would be within his grasp. We cannot regulate the amount of heat which the earth receives from the sun, for instance; but were heat evenly distributed throughout a finite medium it would be possible for man to gather and distribute it again as best served his own purposes—and so with the other powers of nature. But should this control ever be turned to other than social ends, by virtue even of its own completeness it would bring about an overwhelming ruin.

Of the nature of human society as it must have existed under these conditions it is dificult for us to form even a feeble conception. Many of the most important elements that now mould our lives would have to be omitted: the presence of a surrounding and unconquerable brute nature; birth and death, with the consequent passing of the generations; the slow growth to individual intellectual and physical maturity, and the equally slow decay—all these would have no part within that perfect life. And

Socially.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 477.

yet, assuredly, the social units must be coördinated among themselves. "Not being instituted after the idea of generation or of race, however," decides M. Renouvier, "these units can only be represented under the form of agenesic stable families, morally equal, and alike composed of persons having, by virtue of their creation, the knowledge of justice, and possessed of the same universal notions of truth and good; but having, also, different vocations, fitting them to fulfil special functions, different social tasks and services." "These families, considered under this last aspect," he continues, "may be compared to . . . *castes*, distinguished not by the dignity but by the intellectual character of their members, as these are devoted more particularly to artistic, scientific, or constructive work. They may even be regarded as hierarchies, though only in so far as the government of the forces of nature and the direction of the social functions require a dependence to be established and regularly observed between one kind of work and another; and it is required further, in consequence, that a power of command, express or tacit, should be exercised by chiefs."[1] M. Renouvier does not pretend that this is more than a figurative representation of an "integral society," but, as he remarks, we must depict such a society "with characteristics of sensible reality," because no others are accessible to our imagination, and "it is not here a question of mere concepts that confronts us, but a requirement that we shape for ourselves the notion of a real social life under harmonious conditions."[2]

But we must now ask ourselves how it was possible that this first creation should have been destroyed? Man, in that harmonious world, had knowledge adequate to his power, knew the conditions of the order in which he lived, and must have recognized at least the most imminent of the dangers which a violation of that order threatened. To destroy his world, he—a reasonable being—must have acted unreasonably: a conclusion than which nothing could appear more unintelligible to the thorough-going rationalist. As we have seen, however, intelligence is only one aspect of our three-fold nature. Passion plays its part in every act of reason; and, with man, at least, by virtue of the possibilities open to his free will, passion can furnish, in its oscillation between contraries, a motive for morally subversive phenomena. The first of these—being anterior to all experience—may have been violent, and most probably found their motive in an illegitimate exaltation of the single personality, such as we find to-day, for instance, in men whose great desire is to acquire a mastery over

Evil.

Its Motives.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 484.

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 482.

things and persons. They seem to themselves to prove their own independence in thus dominating others. Moreover, a man conscious of a divine order about and within him, yet free, could only prove his freedom to himself by a violation of that order. We might suppose, if we prefer to consider this latter motive operative, that the first crimes were small—experimental, so to speak—but led ever to greater ones. Experience shows us frequently how disputes entered into half in jest, and for the fun of the thing, end by becoming bitter arguments which may lead to lasting enmity. At any rate, it is after some such fashion that we may imagine disorder to have gradually invaded the first world and at last to have overthrown it.[1]

Its Effects.

Its ruin once consummated, or even once begun, a new creation would seem at first sight to be necessary. But this would imply that the first creation was imperfect—an impossible supposition, as we have seen. We must suppose, then, that the fall, being always a possibility, was provided for from the beginning; and, to make this clearer to ourselves, we may assume that certain monadic compositions foreign to the vital functions of the current order were deposited in the lowest depths of the primitive organisms.[2] These we must think of as indissolubly joined with the psychical unity of the subjects wherein they were thus placed, and as indestructible—what ever the state of the elements and forces might become after the disorganization of the world. And these monadic compositions we may suppose, furthermore, were the "germs of organisms which should be capable of reconstituting themselves with other properties at a future time and under other conditions." The germ is not to be realistically conceived of, adds M. Renouvier. We must always keep in mind that it is a representation, denoting power as opposed to action in all that relates to a development of the physiological functions. Only we must assume that life had its origin after some fashion within this world of ours—and in what other manner can we represent that origin to ourselves? For, since experience fails us, we have to make assumptions as to the origin of life on the terrestrial globe.

The Germ.

The Origin of Terrestrial Life.

Now, the life of a monad may be said to begin when the object and subject which constitute the monad's essence "experience modifications which cause their relations to vary in the course of time"—succession being the monad's mode of representing to itself those of its states which may be classified as

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 486-489.

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p, 489—"*si Dieu . . . n'avait deposé au plus profond des organismes primitifs certaines compositions monadiques*," etc.

relatively the more internal.[1] But we find that in our experience a condition of life is "the institution of numerous compounds of *serving monads*, and of compounds of these compounds, molecules of sensible bodies, the end of which is the service of living beings."[2] And for this fact, therefore, we must make allowance. In our day two theories as to the nature of the life process rather than of its origin hold the field, or have held it till very recently. Natural species, invariable in certain essential characteristics, may be supposed to exist, or one may adopt the hypothesis of a common descent for all species. In this latter case actual specific differences would be attributed to successive modfications diverging from generation to generation and following a certain number of determinate lines. The metaphysical passion for unity has given this last theory a force which the facts of experience do not warrant. Variations of great importance may be admitted without supposing them to be produced by degrees allowing of no break. "What would be the naturalist's measure of the resemblance or unlikeness which he should accept as a degree in such a continuous development?" asks M. Renouvier.[3] Man, for instance, differs slightly so far as his organism goes from the order of the quadrumana, and his mental character, while new, yet preserves the fundamental modes of the animal intelligence—memory, imagination, and association. Should we not suppose his peculiar characteristics to be due, then, to the formative power of the intelligent monad over the organism which it has made its own? And as all the life we know of comes from a seed or germ of some kind, we may suppose that all life is due to living germs, which shape according to their nature the organism of serving monads which is the condition of their development. In which case, "the monadology, starting with the existence (*la donnée*) of specific seeds on the surface of the globe, need only occupy itself with their development."[4]

Neither would the inclusion of germs one within the other offer more than an apparent difficulty, since dimensions are relations which may be diminished indefinitely. Besides, the development of the germ may be of the nature of an epigenesis, as many naturalists now recognize that of the egg to be. "In fact, the passage from the state of virtual or latent organization of a germ to the state of a constituted organism is not a geometric operation at all, but the work of a final cause."[5]

"We may then imagine," continues M. Renouvier, "a primitive

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 4
[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 8.
[3] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 52.
[4] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 60, 62. 69. 70.
[5] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 64.

seminal existence which passes first to a sensitive state under conditions appropriate to the functions of the individual; then to a division of the sexes (which is not a specific variation, but a disintegration of the individual within the species) . . .; and finally to a succession of sexual generations of mental beings, the seeds of which were enclosed within the first seed or germ." It is true that this successive development of the individuals of a given species results, by virtue of the law of heredity, in a physiological and psychical likeness between them; but this cannot be taken to imply that the successive germs are not influenced and their powers modified by means of that series of organisms through which they are hereditarily transmitted, and on account of the actions which the individuals may have performed or submitted to in the course of their lives. The germs, therefore, would not remain identically conformed to their first type, but we should expect to find alterations of races and varieties within a species. Man, for instance, considered physiologically, is such a variation. The conditions of his birth and rearing are such as to make it evident that he must have been born to terrestrial life in the midst of an animal species. His psychical character, however, is unique, and we cannot but suppose the birth of the rational animal to be due to a preordained coming into action of the profound generative power deposited within the germs. We may even venture to hold, perhaps, that the character and mental state of each man upon this earth follows upon that state which was his in the primitive world when, in the course of its decomposition, he personally met death; though, as we have just seen, this, his second birth under the new terrestrial conditions, would add traits derived through the law of generation from the mental and physical qualities of his ancestors.[1]

The Conditions of Terrestrial Life.

If, then, we would form a conception oi the state of things brought about by the ruin of the first creation, and of the new conditions under which, in consequence, the intelligent monads were obliged to continue their existence, we must think of the globe "as remaining for a long period after its formation unfit to support a reawakened life; we must cenceive of seminal powers existing in it under insensible forms of virtual organization—forms which could not have had their origin on the globe; and we must hold that these virtual forms developed to the degree in which the means to their ends, the conditions of their existence as individuals, were realized. We may imagine the continents becoming covered with vegetation and animals assimilating to their organisms the matter already elaborated by vegetables—and by other

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 66, 71, 72.

animals in many cases, the life of one depending upon the death of the other. A large number of low species belonging to both kingdoms must be supposed to maintain themselves after the arrival of superior species, even though they should be dangerous to these latter. Moreover, the globe itself, the greater part of its surface being covered with water, can only be thought of as habitable for man in certain spots, and in those miserably for the most part, in the midst of the ruins which the play of brute forces had accumulated, and which opposed great obstacles to his establishment."[1]

Two great laws—or, rather, facts—result from this state of affairs and dominate over it: the facts of death and of the struggle for existence. Reason can find no place for either of these in her ultimate scheme of things, nor can they be conceived of as having had a part in the first, perfect creation. And yet, for this life, they are the lords over life. Death appears as the inevitable result of an individual evolution which places the evolving subject in a state of material dependence upon laws which imply, after its ascending organization, its disorganization, progressive or precipitate. With war, this appears to be the law of the world, the very condition of our being, and of the being of the whole animate creation as well. Yet to this conception of things which nature seems to force upon him man has been able to oppose another notion of existence. Nay, he has absolutely refused to accept any idea of existence save his own as true. He has done justice, felt pity, has sometimes preferred peace to war. He has fought against nature, and has formed the idea of an organization of humanity according to reason. He has hoped to govern the forces of nature through intelligence; he has evne refused to believe in death itself. And, indeed, it may be maintained that experience shows us, not the mortality of the principle of our being, but the fact of the appearance of death; and that only habit, that sole law-giver when logic abandons us, has given us the idea that we are able not to be.[2]

Man.

But by what right, we may ask ourselves, has man thus ventured to oppose himself to the apparent law of the universe, and to set up his own law in its stead? And the answer must be that it is in his character as a free personality that he has so dared to "outface the thunder." Holding himself to be free, he wills not to yield to that course of things which he sees everywhere about him. And yet it would seem that yield he must. It becomes a question for us, then, how far man, in this present world of partial disorder and ruin, remains free. It is his constant

His Freedom.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie.* p. 493.

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie,* pp. 73-75. 190

attempt, his imperious demand, that this world should be made such as he would have it. But, as we must suppose, this world, through his own fault, has escaped beyond his immediate control, and man, in spite of his rebellion, seems to be more the slave of nature than her master. How much of this appearance is mere seeming, it remains for us to determine. We know that each monad, by the very law of its own being, and so far as it is conscious, believes itself to be free; and this belief we have found it necessary to accept as ultimate. Each monad, then, may be an original cause; but its effects, again, would come under the law of preëstablished harmony. Now the fact that the universe of monads is not infinite insures the fact that they do not form a *plenum* (to speak in spatial terms), and that, therefore, no cause can have an infinite effect.[1] In consequence, it follows that these effects, "being confined, like their causes, to very narrow limits where the monads are of an inferior order, would not be noticeable in phenomena which the more elevated and developed monads could appreciate," and so would not appear in the laws of nature. It is only from the point of view of man that nature herself is taken as absolutely determined. In reality, her determination, also, is purely relative. Since, however, man must always have had his own view-point, that freedom of which pre-established harmony admits must always have been a freedom of choice between alternatives. Hence it must be, too, that man retains even to this day whatever powers of action once were his, save as, through his own former acts of choice, he may have fixed the nature of the alternatives offered him. For, the effects of the monad's free actions being harmonious, we have at once that practically complete determination of what is called inanimate nature which leaves only an alternative choice open to man, and the possibility for man and for every monad of making such an alternative choice.[2] This being the case, it becomes more than ever evident that all voluntary action is essentially mental, given within a single central monad, where it commences and terminates in the acceptance or rejection of some particular representation. Moreover, it is evident that in the great majority of our actions the only part played by our proper wills is that they do not prevent the production of that which is represented, with the accompaniment of a certain desire, as being produced.

But this is not true of all our actions. Sometimes the will, or, rather, the whole self as expressed in the will, does exert its power; sometimes a representation is rejected; and in this fact

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 22, 23, 42 [Notes 39, 31].

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 223. 225.

lies all our hope for the future. The will of man being free, the fall became a possibility; and since the will of man is free there is always the possibility that the fall may be retrieved. The results of no one wrong choice can be prolonged to infinity. Nevertheless, each wrong like each right act has a tendency to perpetuate itself; for even if the will thenceforth is rightly directed, its former choice brings about such confusion that in making another choice an honest blunder may well occur. But such blunders cannot constantly occur, and their effects, also, would be finite. Even at the best, however, the process of redemption must now be a long and weary one. Though we should suppose every monad to be obedient to the inmost law of its own nature, should each from this time forward so far as in it lies obey utterly the categorical imperative, the state of things has become such that the opportunities for error would still be almost endless; and, alas, many wills have other aims than that one great end which they should set before themselves. Nor can we hope while this world lasts to do away with the injustice its mere physical condition renders unavoidable. All that is open to each one of us is to keep the ideal of social welfare, as a moral and not as an economic aim, before our eyes and follow it to the best of our judgment. We shall make errors enough, we may be sure, but our belief must be that the law of the universe is the law of the good, and that it is working for us, as we for it. Nor are we left unaided in our endeavor. All about us, known to us or unknown, and in the most unlikely ways and places, other men are striving "to be good," as runs the childish phrase. Sometimes it may seem as though we stood alone with all the world against us, but this is never so. And then, again, it is always the wrong in its right that makes a good cause fail, or seem to fail. Neither must we forget to allow, to ourselves and in our own hearts, at any rate, for the fact that we ourselves may be in error. If a dark hour comes, this thought may comfort us, although it is a thought to be driven far away in a time of conflict. Besides all this, it is to be recalled that we work as members of a race, and that the human race in its effort to attain once more to its lost happiness and perfection, has built up many forms and institutions to be an aid to it. Into some social framework each one of us is born. The labor of our forefathers has created it; it expresses to a greater or less degree the ideal of their spirits as of ours—justice. To this framework we must conform ourselves, seeking ever to do our utmost to make it subserve the end to which it was erected. We may even venture to change it here and there; but if we attempt this great

task we should do well to remember that, while good laws are good, just men are better, and that the aim of all our effort should be to rouse and help the individual to a sense of what he should require of himself. Good laws without good customs are of little value, as this hard old world of ours found out long ago.

And now that we have seen how evil may be presumed to have entered into the world, and how it continues therein, let us proceed to consider the part it plays at the present time under the law of preëstablished harmony.

The Office of Evil.

God, says M. Renouvier, must have wished that the second life of man should begin under those evil conditions which he had himself established, since such was the medium foreseen and prepared by God from the start as the consequence of that fall which was always possible. Being such as He is, however, He could only have wished this as a method of correcting and educating, through an experience of the empire of evil, that creature which had desired evil. This reign of suffering must be conceived of, then, as a reign of distributive justice for the persons who are born into it and who all suffer more or less under the hard laws of the present world; and it must be thought of, also, as a test or preparatory state for their final end.[1]

Now, whatever we may think of the second of these two propositions, the first must appear far from evident to us. Is it not absurd to regard that state of affairs from which our idea of injustice is derived as a reign of distributive justice? Do we not judge rightly when we declare the state of things to be unjust in which one man suffers through the fault of another, and in which conditions of life are prepared for men before their birth which augment or diminish their chances of happiness and of leading a virtuous life? Let us remember, however, that this world must be held to be a product of the fall. Men cannot be supposed to enter into it in a state of innocence. On the contrary, they bring with them whatever character they may have acquired in their former life, and, developing it on a lower theatre of action, learn what good is by experiencing evil. We protest against the solidarity of evil, but that is to protest against the solidarity of good as well, for each springs from the solidarity of the human race itself, which lies at the root of the very idea of justice. It is only in seeing how one man suffers through the evil doing of another that we fully learn of the hideousness of injustice, of evil. The sufferings of the innocent best enable us to realize the reasonableness of duty and the necessity of justice. For that

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 494-499.

matter, it may be that we are not justified in regarding any condition of humanity, however lamentable it may appear in a given case, as out of proportion with the participation of that person in the original sin. We may pity, we may help, we may strive to overcome the conditions making such a state of affairs possible, but we may scarcely venture to say that those conditions are ultimately unjust. Then, too, the present state of the individual must be supposed to be determined in connection with his position in the primitive world of which he once formed a part, and with that other which will be his in the reconstituted human society of the reign of ends. Now, as neither of these can be supposed to be constituted after our present order of physical life, they must remain unknown to us; but we may think of them as capable of furnishing an explanation of many of this world's riddles. Nay, we may even conceive of a plurality of transitory lives in this or in other worlds, if so we choose—an ascending and descending series of tests—so long as we think of them as forming a single related system, starting from a beginning and moving toward an end.[1]

The Evil Will.

We have to do with a more general question than that of a possible plurality of transitory lives on the part of the individual monad, however. We have to ask if the principle of liberty will permit us to conceive of a definite end for the life of any individual. Does not the idea of a constant test imply the possibility of a constant failure to meet that test? Man being free, is not the thought of a universal salvation rendered at least uncertain? The brutal or diabolically perverse state of many men, so far as we may venture to judge of them, is an evident fact of experience. Moreover, we see that moral degradation leads in the long run to the death of individuals and of races. May not this mean that liberty may be its own destruction—that evil may put a stop to itself by annihilating the being in which it is established, the organism it has turned away from its true destination? The central monad of such an organism, we may suppose, would forfeit its original rank or place within the system of monads, and thus, perhaps, those elements which the exercise of free will rendered definitely unassimilable by the good would be eliminated from the creation. For the moral law does not oblige the philosopher to recognize a right to eternal life in those who, in the exercise of their liberty, exclude themselves from that society where liberty is loved and respected. But it may be that at last, after suffering many evils in this and perhaps in other worlds, all souls will awake from their passion-born dream of pride, and

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 501-506.

will recognize the law of their own being; so that in the end none will be absent from the republic of ends.[1]

The Three Moments of Creation.

It is to be presumed, however, that the life of mankind under its actual form will endure as long as the conditions of life upon the earth continue, and that these will not change while the stability of the solar system remains relatively what it is to-day. Therefore, we may assume that a longer time than that occupied between the formation of the first whirl in the nebula and the cooling of the earth's surface until it could support life yet separates us from the end of this present system; and that this is the time that will be necessary for the regeneration of humanity, for its adaptation to its new surroundings, and for its becoming once again a society of justice having full command over the laws of nature.

And we may suppose, also, that this third world will practically reproduce the physical conditions of the first, but with new conditions of development and of adaptation to the human race reborn within it. In this new world, man will have and exercise all the powers of which he was originally possessed, and, added to this, he will have gained a practical knowledge of the nature and effects of evil which will save him presumedly from any course of action which might lead to a second fall, although we may imagine, perhaps, that the remembered sorrow of his earthly life may add a certain joy to his new existence, and, reflected in song, story or tragedy, form part of the beauty of his new life.

But it is not necessary to suppose that in this new world the human spirit will attain an intellectual and moral perfection which would tend to identify humanity with God. This is impossible, indeed, for it is not conceivable that there should enter into the mind of God, who is the perfect intelligence, or into His thought of an action, the thought of realizing any other alternative. The freedom of God is not to be thought of as a freedom of choice between alternatives of action, and hence, as this is what we mean by freedom, we must say of God that He is not free, and that freedom is not an attribute of the perfect personality. In other words, the perfect freedom is necessity. Even man, it may be added, as he grows toward perfection, will become less free in this our sense of freedom, although even in the third world he will have succeeded in gaining only an habitual virtue. Potentially free, he will be free no longer in reality, but the necessity he knows will be a necessity of his own creation—one which he possesses, not one by which he is possessed.[2]

Such, then, is the system which M. Renouvier founds upon his

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 507-510.

[2] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 519.

belief in the liberty of the human subject—a belief which, as has been previously stated, he holds to be the basis of experience itself, the assumption upon which all knowledge rests. This is not the only assumption which he who desires to know must make, however. Tried by that ultimate criterion, the idea of justice, the representations of experience reveal the necessity of four other beliefs which, therefore, deserve to be called rational. The first of these—the belief in the plurality of being—has already been sufficiently developed. Springing from the belief in liberty we have, secondly, the belief in duty as the consciousness of an obligation differing from a necessary law. Added to this is the belief in the universality of good (as a correlative of the moral imperative), and the belief in the agreement between reason and reality. Resulting from these, moreover, there is a sixth necessary belief: that in the cosmos of our conception the just and the useful perfectly coincide.[1] These beliefs, says M. Renouvier, must be regarded as the presuppositions of all experience. They are reasonable, but beyond reason. They are of the nature of the consciousness itself, known by the intelligence, and as so known having a place in experience, though as relating principles rather than as relations. That experience should contradict them ultimately is impossible, for it is founded upon them; and, therefore, every thinker must find a place for them in his philosophy. In consequence, the axioms which sum up the conclusions of the neo-critical school are not unlike the Kantian formulas, and, like them, are regarded as at once the criterion and presupposition of all philosophical thinking. They may be stated as follows: 1. Nature is the work of the understanding; 2. Experience, as such, is of phenomena, but besides these, its creations, certain distinct affirmations of consciousness may be known as *within* experience but not *of* it; 3. The necessary beliefs comprised within experience are six in number—the belief in the plurality of being, in individual liberty, in duty, in the universality of good, in the agreement between reason and reality, and in the coincidence of the just and the useful; 4 Nothing outside the limits of experi- is knowable.

The Neo-Critical. Criterion.

Necessary Beliefs.

Such is the fashion in which the problem of the relation of man to the universe, and of the universe to man, is solved by M. Renouvier. To sum up his thought more briefly: We must in the beginning, he holds, accept Kant's *dicta* that knowledge is confined to experience, and that experience is of phenomena. If, therefore, we would base our speculations without knowledge, their starting point must be found within experience; while the ultimate fact of our

Summary of the Argument.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 261.

experience is, as known, a representative relation in consciousness—that of the object to the subject within the subject. Since, however, this relation involves contradictions, we are led to the conclusion that experience is grounded upon certain beliefs, and must conform to these, or be taken so to conform—one of the necessary beliefs being a belief in the agreement between reason and reality. Only in this manner can our experience be made intelligible, and that our experience should be intelligible is the aim of all our thinking.

Another belief we are, as it were, forced to hold, is a belief in the real externality—or, rather, objectivity—of the object. Being an element of consciousness, the object cannot differ essentially from consciousness. It must be thought of as another consciousness, or the representation of such another. Moreover, seeing that —unlike the subject—it is not represented as single, it might better be taken as a representation of other consciousnesses; and the universe be defined as a system of consciousnesses. For the objective representations enter into the system of the single consciousness, which they could hardly do were they not themselves systematic. And since this notion corresponds so closely with Leibniz's conception of nature, we may, adopting his terminology for convenience' sake, call each of these consciousnesses a "monad."

Now, as real, the system of monads cannot be taken as infinite, and our hypothesis is that it is real. We may think of it, therefore, as a hierarchy, though not as a continuous hierarchy, since it is finite. Vast numbers of serving monads must be taken as finding their reason, not in themselves, but in the higher monads whose instruments they are—one monad being subjected to the control of another through the operation of the law of preëstablished harmony.

But when we undertake to examine this universe of monads we find that as presented to us in experience it flatly contradicts a number of the beliefs already determined upon as the basis of experience. Notably the belief in the universality of good seems to be contravened by that experience which depends upon it. The antinomies of experience, after compelling us to accept belief as its foundation, now seem to overthrow that belief. However, since it is our aim to make experience intelligible, we must in this case cling to our beliefs, and seek in some manner to set aside or reinterpret the apparent witness of experience.

The first solution of this problem that suggests itself is that the nature of the universe differs essentially from that of the single monad, which is the source of our experience. But the monads not

being quantitative in character, we can hardly deem ourselves justified in regarding the whole they form as differing from its parts. More probably the difference would lie in the source of the universe. The experience of each monad has its source in consciousness, but need we conceive of the universe as having such a source? Need it have a source at all, indeed? This latter supposition goes too far. We cannot think of consciousness as either coming into or going out of being in any of the more usual meanings of those words, while the notion of an infinite regress or progress is unintelligible. Therefore, we must think of every monad in the universe as a creation, and, the universe being a system, of all the monads as created at once, though, strictly speaking, we have here no right to use temporal terms at all.

The only creative power we know, however, is precisely consciousness, and consciousness as personal at that. If we would not depart from experience, then, we must think of the universe as the creation of a personal consciousness—a consciousness, that is, possessed of intelligence, freedom of action, and the desire for happiness. The only way in which we can think of it as differing from our own, indeed, is to conceive of all these qualities as carried to the greatest imaginable point of perfection. And such a consciousness could not have created a world in which evil had a part, for it could not have desired to produce unhappiness—or, at least, we cannot permit ourselves to believe that it should have done so.

Therefore, we must conclude that the world of our experience is not the world which was due to the original action of the creative power. Judging from the marks of order and disorder which it unites within it, it would appear to be, rather, the ruin of such a world. And the only cause discoverable for such a ruin lies in the free will of man—the object of another necessary belief. For the will of the perfect consciousness, being perfectly free, would be likewise perfectly determined. No alternative courses of action would present themselves to it as possible for it. The motives for this ruin, again, would be found either in a desire for self-aggrandizement on the part of the individual monads, or in their wish to demonstrate their freedom to themselves. In either case they would violate the moral law of the universe—that principle of justice into which the personal desire for happiness is converted as soon as there is a question of the happiness of more than one person.

But, since this is the law of the universe, it would tend to right itself automatically after its violation, by virtue of the principle of preëstablished harmony. Thus a world of sorrow

would be created for the violators of the law, in which they would be involved according to the precise degree in which they had violated it; while as the effect of such violation or violations wore away, so would the world they made resolve itself once more into a realm of order. The very breaking of the law, indeed, would have its place in the order of things, for it would impress upon those monads who in their freedom presumed to go against it, the fact that such action was not fitting; and having learned from experience the bitterness of evil, the monads might thenceforth be utterly obedient to the law of justice, and might, in truth, render their obedience so much a thing of habit that it should become even for them a matter of moral necessity.

C.

Criticism and Comment.

From the account that has been given of the neo-critical system of philosophy it will be evident that this is one of those systems in which the moral interest predominates over all others. It is an ethical rather than a cosmic system; its conception of the universe is modelled after the pattern of humanity, after the pattern of the individual man, and of the individual man as a moral individual. But strong as is M. Renouvier's preoccupation with the human problem, the ethical bent of his system results, as it seems to me, from his conception of the nature of knowledge. According to his view the world of knowledge is confined, strictly speaking, within the limits of the individual consciousness. Moreover, whatever we may believe as to the plurality of individuals and other matters, and however great may be the superior certainty of these beliefs over that which we ordinarily call knowledge, it is only as known, as an integral part of the individual consciousness, that these beliefs are able to play their *role* within the little drama of our lives. From first to last knowledge is regarded as something which the individual, and only the individual, possesses. It is his, and as his own he knows it. Man is confined within the bounds of his own consciousness. Strive as he may, he can never get beyond himself. He is enclosed forever within the limits of his own personality. To maintain this notion of man's individuality seems to me to have been the motive for the elaboration of M. Renouvier's system, though, to be sure, a secondary motive may be found in his wish to relieve the cause of the universe from all responsibility for the evil within it. Yet along with this conception of the impregnable nature of human individuality goes another—that man is an individual in relation with other individuals. And to the development of these seemingly incompatible notions the peculiar form of this system is due. It remains for us to consider, then, how far these varying notions have been reconciled, how far M. Renouvier has succeeded in finding a place within his reasoned world for the contradictions

of experience. That his attempt is ingenious no one can deny. That all the resources of a learned and most cultivated mind have been employed in his work is obvious. The charm of his style, and the freshness and value of many of his observations, must strike every reader. Nevertheless, it may be questioned whether this venerable thinker has succeeded in developing quite the final system of thought which his followers, if not himself, are inclined to claim for him; and whether, indeed—leaving aside all thought of a final system of philosophy—all or even most of humanity's long-standing puzzles find the best explanation they yet have known within the system of the "new monadology."

The Problem of Consciousness.

Let us see, in the first place, exactly what M. Renouvier may be supposed to mean by an "individual," for this word seems to be employed in somewhat different senses in various parts of his work, and that without a sufficient warning of the change in meaning having been given. To begin with, an individual as known is only conceivable as a relation, he says, since all knowledge, as such, it purely relative. An individual is a "function of all the categories," a process. Consciousness itself—for knowledge, always—is a process. An individual, then, is a thinker, and, as represented by himself to himself, a *fixed series* of thoughts. It is the series which is immediately experienced; but the thinker to whom the series is present—and to whom its fixedness may be said to be partly due—is believed in with a belief which is the foundation of knowledge and experience alike. Nevertheless, this thinker is only definable in terms of the series present to it. The two are inseparable aspects of one object, so to speak, and from the point of view of the knowing mind the serial aspect is the more noteworthy. But it is the thinker who is taken as the true individual. It is as a thinker that man demands perfect happiness, perfect freedom and perfect knowledge—upon the first of which demands, at least, M. Renouvier's whole reconstruction of the universe is based. That the physical conditions of our world are such that this demand of the conscious thinker for happiness cannot be gratified, and that, therefore, this world cannot be the true one, is his argument. Now at the beginning of his labors, as has been said already, M. Renouvier resolved to be guided by experience, and to "seek nothing beyond that which takes place within the intelligence as an order of relations, and never to admit relations the definitions of which imply contradiction." These two resolves were found to be incompatible each with the other, however, and, the former being the more important, we find that here and there, as experience has dictated, a definition has been admitted the terms of which, if interpreted literally,

The Individual Consciousness.

would imply contradiction. Such is this definition of the individual as a "fixed series" of thoughts—a definition from which quite different conclusions may be drawn according as the serial aspect or that of fixity is insisted upon. Such, again, is the definition of the laws of nature when it is said that, if only phenomena exist for knowledge, their laws must be themselves phenomena, but phenomena *which are constant, or which are constantly assembled or reproduced.* Then we are assured that the monad must believe itself a unity, a one, something so complete that if it is to be a part at all it can only be so qualitatively. Now, though the term may not be without its meaning, what are we to understand definitely, concretely—as M. Renouvier insists that it is the business of the intelligence to understand—by the conception of a qualitative part? "An explanation which is unintelligible," he says, "is no explanation," and when a conflict occurred between the categories of causation and number in the concept of an infinite regress, for instance, the difficulty was met, so far as the direct appeal to the intelligence was concerned, by the statement that what was infinite was unintelligible, unknowable, and therefore outside of experience altogether. Furthermore, it was added, the direct verdict of the whole consciousness was in favor of freedom of action. That is, the individual monad was dowered with a power of original causation as a concession to intelligibility; and by *intelligible* would seem to have been meant, capable of being fully comprehended and clearly defined. Knowledge potential and knowledge actual may be one from one point of view, yet surely there is a distinction between them for which M. Renouvier has not here made allowance. Accepting his notion of intelligibility, however, if the consciousness believes itself one even while believing also in the otherness of the object—which, therefore, it interprets as the otherness of another consciousness—in what sense is it rendered intelligible by the notion of a qualitative part? For the system does not provide for a conflict between necessary beliefs.

Most certainly, when we speak of a quality of any object we do not mean a part of it. Rather we mean by that term an aspect of the whole object; and although if we attempt to measure qualities in any way, to define or compare them, we pass forthwith to a new point of view, we recognize it as new. We do not say that quantity is quality. We measure parts, but they are not parts of qualities. A qualitative part would seem to mean, then—if we attempt to give definiteness to the conception—a quality of some object kept in mind when that object is viewed quantitatively, and attributed to each of its quantitative

parts. But even as such it would not be an aspect of a different whole from the whole of which it was before an aspect or quality, save as each part might be regarded by an act of abstraction as provisionally a whole. Some such process may be gone through with in the case of the monad. Perhaps we are to conceive that it is as qualitative that the monad is taken as the self-centred unity of consciousness; while when it views itself, for convenience' sake, quantitatively, it holds itself to be a part of a universe of monads. Yet this cannot be, for in the latter case there would be something of illusion, or of conscious assumption, rather, in the monad's quantitative point of view; and M. Renouvier makes the otherness of the object as much a matter of necessary belief as the unity of the subject itself. There is nothing in his objectified-subject which would lead us to regard it as a *provisional* whole. On the contrary, every monad is a separate existence; its being is from the beginning and will continue to the end of the creation. It is because the monad is not taken as a provisional whole, indeed, that we have to reconstruct this universe. The monad demands perfect happiness, and there are many monads, all of whose claims stand equal in the light of reason. So it would seem that, although the solution of his problem may lie hidden in the notion of a qualitative part, M. Renouvier has failed to give to this conception that degree of clearness which he himself has declared necessary in order that a notion shall be intelligible.

Individual Consciousness.

Besides this, we find that the consciousness which, for knowledge, is only a centre of representation, and which, as not an experience of phenomena, is not anything to which a name can be given, but merely a possibility of being, equivalent to just nothing at all—we find, I say, that this very consciousness, this nothing, is that which gives the progressive phenomenal process its value. For the mere scene of a progressive phenomenal process, as consciousness appears to the eye of knowledge, would be as much as before a mere possibility of being, an "is-not," a nothing. In short, the more one considers consciousness the more it appears, not as a centre of representation, but as a relating power which, somehow, relates itself, since what it relates cannot be defined as differing from it. What is not for knowledge is not at all, says our philosopher, yet experience has forced him to confess that consciousness, according to his own definitions, is one thing for knowledge and another for belief, and that, from the latter point of view, the monad tends more and more to present the idea of a closed system as representing its nature. The single consciousness makes the "other" ever more and more

its own, and so no other; the other consciousness loses itself in the one, or there finds itself, as one may choose to express it. In the long run the individual, or monad, must be looked upon as that subject within which the object is related—according to the definition of consciousness as "a relation of object to subject *within the subject.*" Therefore, we may ask ourselves whether the belief in the otherness of the object is as finally necessary as M. Renouvier has held it to be, or whether, so far as his monad represents itself as a part of a system, it does not represent itself as that which it is not to itself—for to itself it is an identity comprehending all differences within it. Should not M. Renouvier's conclusion have been that the monad *is* the system? Its quarrel with experience, as he exhibits the dispute, goes only so far as experience represents matters otherwise—only so far as experience seems to show that the world is "a universe of monads." Not "the perfect individual in a perfect society" is the aim of consciousness, it would seem, but the perfect individual. "There cannot be two queens in one hive," says the proverb, and neither can there be, on M. Renouvier's own showing, two individuals in one universe. "The human consciousness in this world," he says, "is made up of two men—the man of experience and the ideal man. The first we name our character; it consists of native qualities peculiar to ourselves or inherited, and of the virtues and vices we develope in the course of our lives. The second is the person, which we recognize when we discover beneath our empirical self a superior I (*moi*) which the conditions of nature and the exigencies of society restrain and oppress, and which deems them contrary to happiness and justice. How can the character, with its defects and vices, the instincts and passions born from the fatalities of its relations, coexist with the person, the lover of truth, justice and beauty? To solve this problem it is necessary to choose between a moral world or the simple world of experience. We must decide which man is the true one." And he decides, of course, for the person. God, he says, is the "perfect person" or individual; and the "perfect individual" (in a perfect society) is the end of the creation. But is an imperfect "person" conceivable? Or more than one perfect person? And why, granting more than one person to be possible, if we accept the claim of the person to be the true individual, and form the universe anew that it may know perfect happiness, do we still refuse it perfect freedom—except as an acquirement—and deny perfect intelligence to it permanently?[1]

Individuals.

We should not carry the idea of human perfectibility to a degree

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 4, 453, 456, 461, 519.

which "tends to identify humanity with God," says M. Renouvier. But neither, in that case, should we allow the human claim to happiness, for only the perfect person can be truly happy. If consciousness is a fact which may be interpreted in two or more different ways, and one of these ways is chosen as on the whole the more intelligible from the standpoint of experience (as explaining experience), then the other and less intelligible mode of explanation should at least be shown to be comprised within or superseded by the chosen method. If consciousness is implicitly not a progressive process, and is incapable of being finally conceived as such, then what part does the consciousness which appears to be progressive play within it?

The Relative Consciousness.

This latter form of consciousness, it is to be remembered, is the only one which is actually *known* to us, according to our philosopher. M. Renouvier is never tired of insisting that, apart from the phenomenal series, consciousness is inconceivable, and, indeed, is *not*—so far as we are concerned, at any rate. Such ideas as those of infinity, omniscience, etc., are not true ideas at all, but illusions born in the doubtful (and detestable) realm of metaphysics—illusions which have caused trouble enough to realize almost the conception of the infinite within the else-placid kingdom of philosophy. Not even that creative consciousness we must assume to be present to the world, since the world exists, can be thought of as other than progressive; for to strive to think of it otherwise would be to cease to think of it at all. "The infinite metaphysics with its concepts, contradictory in themselves, of an actual eternity, of ubiquity, and of the foreknowledge of future contingencies, made of God a being whose mode of intelligence was not intelligible," says M. Renouvier indignantly. And yet M. Renouvier himself has shown the concept of a purely progressive consciousness to be no less unintelligible. He has pointed out that consciousness tends toward the concept of a closed system as representing its own nature; and he has adopted this latter notion as being most in accord with man's moral ideal. What, however, would become of a consciousness progressive within a closed system? Could such a consciousness be reckoned progressive at all? This question is one which M. Renouvier does not appear to have considered, although it is never safe to say that any one point has been left entirely unnoticed in the case of so voluminous a writer. However, so far as the great mass of his work is concerned, he seems to vary between the two concepts of consciousness—consciousness as it is for knowledge and consciousness as it is for belief—without attempting to reconcile the differences that may exist between them.

And this method of procedure, while sufficiently clear to the mind of the writer, no doubt, is confusing to the reader, owing to the fact that either view is insisted upon as may best suit the purpose of the argument.[1]

But this problem of the relation which may be supposed to exist between consciousness as relative and consciousness as absolute is no easy one to solve. It is, indeed, the riddle over which the lovers of wisdom have worked since philosophy began—and over which they are working still. Let us continue, then, to examine the assumptions upon which M. Renouvier has based his attempted solution of this problem—a solution acknowledged to be one of the most noteworthy answers offered in our day to the riddle of the philosophical Sphinx.

Is it true that for knowledge, even, consciousness appears as entirely progressive, relative? As a matter of fact, do we not view our consciousness at certain rare moments as one, and, as it were, at rest? Neither do these moments seem like moments of belief, no matter how absolute the assertion of faith may be supposed to be: rather, in these moments knowledge seems most truly itself. We may even question if these rare experiences are not the basis of that obstinate belief of ours that consciousness is a unity. The belief would then be based on experience, not experience on the belief. If we conceive of consciousness as progressive, simply, it is agreed that we cannot explain our experience at all. It is no help to us to say that what we have is an immense number of single consciousnesses, each of which developes out of what we must call the unconscious, and passes into it again; that some of these consciousnesses form series which show a development within themselves; that such development within a series is not universal; and that, developed or undeveloped, such conscious series, like every single consciousness, may be expected to become merged in the unconscious once more. Nor does it aid us to add that the unconscious may be called matter; that matter appears to the more developed consciousness as organized; and that, since a certain degree of organization is generally accompanied by consciousness, we may venture to call consciousness an expression of a material organism. This whole notion is sufficiently unreasonable. How would it be to go to the other extreme, and insist that consciousness is not progressive? The notion appears absurd on the face of it, but is it so absurd as it seems? Consciousness, it may be said, can only be thought of as progressive; but to this it may be answered that that depends upon what "progressive" means.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 98, 254, 281, 364.

If it means "going forward," or "rising higher"—the senses in which it is constantly used by M. Renouvier—it is not true that consciousness must be progressive. We must think of consciousness as an activity, perhaps; but why not as an activity that simply maintains itself? As such it would not be passive, and neither would it progress. It could not unfold itself, for it would need no unfolding, and it might even be described as perfectly happy. That is, we might say—following Aristotle—that happiness is found in unhindered activity according to nature, and that there was and could be nothing to hinder the intelligent self-maintenance of the One. Nothing in this way of stating the case contradicts that notion of consciousness as a closed system to which his study of experience forced M. Renouvier, and which he embodied both in the conception of the individual monad and in that of the universe of monads as a fixed and definite whole. But M. Renouvier thought of consciousness at the same time as progressive or developing; so that nothing would seem to be left for any of his consciousnesses (including the perfect creative consciousness) to do, save to go round and round within the circle of its own being forevermore—like a squirrel in a cage, to use a hackneyed comparison. In the case of a self-maintaining consciousness, on the other hand, the activity of the individual would have to be thought of as a knowledge of itself throughout the instant of eternity, it seems to me; and we find it hard to think of eternity save as continued time. A knowledge that was eternal would not be knowledge, we say, just as an unvarying sound heard continually would never be heard at all—for which reason our dull earthly sense is deaf to the music of the spheres, according to the ancient belief. Moreover, such a consciousness could not be described, and to say that a thing *is*, and to say nothing else, is nearly the same as to say nothing whatever about it, as Hegel long ago pointed out. But in a universe that had room only for one individual, and that individual a perfect consciousness maintaining itself, eternity, I think, would really have to be considered as analogous to what we call an instant. A perfectly individual consciousness would be "fixed at the apex," to borrow Browning's phrase, and time, in our sense of the word, would not exist for it. It would be conscious somewhat as we are conscious in our rarest moments of most perfect insight—as we know and feel in those instants from an experience of which we have supposed the conception of consciousness as a unity to be derived. All of which, however, it may well be said, adds nothing to our power of explaining the progressive consciousness whose experience is a series of instants.

M. Renouvier considers that he has overcome this difficulty by presenting the monad consciousness as a creation, and the aspect of imperfection within it as a permanent state. "The creature," he says, "can never be perfect in the full sense of that word, which is applicable only to God: it can only attain a perfection relative to its qualities, and which—seeing the character of its life and the development of its being—is of the nature of an end. Such a relative perfection is the destined end divinely assigned to it. On the other hand, a perfect Creator could have willed and loved from the beginning only a good and perfect work. . . . This difficulty can only be removed by distinguishing moments within the history of the creation. Two are pertect, but one of these was a state of unstable equillibrium, the instability of which was inseparable from its excellence, and was, moreover, a condition of the last moment, which will be invariable and definite. The intermediate state is the reign of suffering. It is at the price of pain that the gift of liberty is purchased."[1]

The Creative Hypothesis.

But does the hypothesis of a creator fully solve this problem? Hardly, it would seem, if each monad is potentially a creator, or even actually so, being *ex hypothesi* capable of originating a causal series. As M. Renouvier himself says: "If one considers that all things of which man can attain knowledge, whether that knowledge be experimental or logical, have their foundation and cause (*moyen*) within that which he knows of himself; that all relations, all that is intelligible in the world, are included within those universal orders of relation which are called categories; that the categories are all conditioned, brought together, and summed up in the unique relation of subject to object which we know as consciousness or personality; that thus the laws of nature are the laws of the human spirit, or are known exclusively through and according to these laws; that all which is known of good and of evil, of pleasure and of pain, are only human judgments and human sensations, even if transported by analogy to other beings whose images we see; that all the objects in which we take an interest, and all our views and researches upon the past and the future of the world concern humanity directly or indirectly, what man is or what he believes himself to be, the laws which he gives himself, his destiny; and if, finally, one knows, without recourse to the difficult and abstract teachings of an idealistic philosophy, that man is all for man—disregarding God, the very idea of whom is drawn, by the way, from the idea which man has of himself—*then* one may comprehend that the creation

1 *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 464.

of the world is, first and essentially, the creation of man."[1] And the man who is thus created, and whose remarkable powers are briefly indicated in this overwhelming sentence, is not, I would add, the mere imperfect monad of the created system, but the true individual whose definition is a definition of God, not of man! In order to be and do all this the monad must be more than potentially individual. To say that the absolutely perfect created the relatively perfect does not make clear the relation between them if, in order to make such an explanation plausible, one is compelled to define the relative as potentially absolute. We have simply the old problem of the relation between the progressive and the self-maintaining consciousness stated in new terms. One is potentially the other, but is not the other; and how is this possible?

Primacy of the Ideal Consciousness.

This question is one to be more easily asked than answered, as has been said before; but it seems evident that, whatever the relation between the two forms of consciousness may be, it is the self-maintaining consciousness which must be taken as primary, as including and transcending the relative consciousness. For, as M. Renouvier's own analysis made evident, the relative consciousness realizes itself under the other form, tends to regard itself, to use our author's phrase once more, as a "closed system." The relative or successive consciousness must then be, somehow, an element or aspect of the self-maintaining consciousness—may represent, indeed, that aspect of difference which, according to many eminent logicians, forms an essential element in the concept of identity. When I try to represent to myself what this relation of the successive to the constant consciousness may be like, however, I find it easiest to imagine the successive consciousness as perhaps remotely analagous to those constantly fluctuating sensations which, as some psychologists tell us, form the basis of our own mental life, but of the existence of which we are quite unconscious. Even when for a moment, then, our vision seems to widen, and, grasping some aspect of one idea or feeling completely, we lose for that instant all consciousness of time; when there is no shifting of the attention, but we are content in a complete idea; even in that most fleeting instant, I say, there must be a fluctuation, not of consciousness, but of its elements, which fluctuation does not alter the conscious state, but simply maintains it. Time, we might say, would be in such a conscious state, but the conscious state would not be in time. It would not know time; time would form no part of its experience. And if we imagine such a state of mind to be permanent, and the object

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 465-466.

of its attention to be not any incomplete aspect of any one of its own ideas, but the complete idea of the whole universe, or itself, we may form, I think, a dim notion of the nature of a self-maintaining consciousness. Within such a consciousness the relative consciousnesses known to us would be fully comprehended, in every sense of that word, although it could not be conscious of them in the same way in which they are conscious of each other. Yet each relative consciousness, as essentially an aspect of a consciousness not relative, would, in its true nature, be not relative itself. We may imagine, perhaps—seeing that consciousness is never essentially relative—that it is as each relative element transcends its own relativity and comprehends its relations to other elements, that it rises in the scale of being. "God is each grain of dust," says an oriental proverb. It may be that the dust that makes our frame, for instance, has succeeded in knowing itself as human, and may finally know itself to be divine. This is rather mysticism than science, however.

The Problem of Freedom.

This same problem of the relation between the two forms of consciousness confronts us in another shape when we turn to consider that conception of human liberty as a freedom of choice between alternatives which M. Renouvier has made one of the very bases of his system. This liberty is not that which characterizes the perfect individual; it is not the liberty of God—although the creative consciousness is only conceivable as successive in its mode of activity, and the idea of alternatives of action (though not of its own action) is no stranger to it. "The idea of the truly infinite for God and for the spirits made in His image," says our philosopher, for instance, "is the idea of possibility."[1] Yet it is the liberty with which the creator is supposed to have endowed the created monad in the very beginning of all things. It must be thought of therefore, as perfect—relatively perfect—and as such it is retained by the monad throughout the three "moments" of creation; or, rather, only habit at last releases the monad from its own will. In place, then, of the old question, Why did God create evil? we have the corresponding form, Why did God permit a freedom of choice to his creatures? But the answer to this, according to our philosopher, is obvious. The divine ideal does not desire slaves. Liberty of choice is itself one of the perfections of the creature. For if we adopt the hypothesis of a human animal determined in everything, we must admit—supposing God to be good—that that animal would be perfectly happy, likewise; and this the physical conditions of our world forbid us to consider possible. Therefore, we should have

Relative and Perfect Freedom.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 461.

to hold the creator to be the direct author of evil—which is manifestly impossible.[1]

I hope that I have not been unfair to M. Renouvier in thus summing up his astonishing argument in favor of liberty of choice as a perfection in the created monad. It seems to amount to this: Conditions being such as experience presents them to us, liberty of choice in the creature must be presupposed in order to relieve the author of the universe from the charge of being the author of evil. Therefore, liberty of choice is a perfection of the creature—a sequence of reasoning the logical force of which is not apparent. Is one to hold that the perfect individual consciousness deems itself enslaved? Why, this relative freedom is itself a slavery from which, by means of its own endeavors, the social monad at last practically (and thankfully) escapes!

And if a state of entire determination, of subjection to the rule of a higher knowledge, is slavery, what is the condition of those serving monads whose state of arrested intellectual development is assuredly to continue—according to M. Renouvier—throughout the three moments of creation? Are they not just such unconscious "slaves" to man as man, under the deterministic theory as it is here represented, would be to God? Yet these monads, it is maintained, cannot be called slaves, since the purposes to which they are applied are (or *were*, before the fall) purposes to which their own natures give the warrant, and to which besides, if their intellectual development had been such as to permit them to understand those purposes in full, they would have given their consent. Under present conditions, I presume, such serving monads as, by the action of the law of preëstablished harmony, are subjected to the sway of evil wills, must be reckoned as actual and helpless slaves. We might ask, indeed—accepting for the nonce this creative theory of the universe—whether God, having created a system of consciousnesses akin to his own, which by their nature as forming a system were incapable of complete intellectual development, did not therewith become Himself guilty of injustice, since in creating another or others His own claim to complete individual happiness must have lost its original force? And, in fact, as God is not to be conceived save in His relation to the universe as its cause, nor to be defined as existing before it, He would have to be thought of as throughout all relative time unjust, should time be taken as existing: though to conceive of Him as unjust is contrary to any possible hypothesis. Besides, as defined and definable only in His relation to His created universe, would He not have to be reckoned as one of its qualitative parts, or it have to be thought of as no universe?

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 468-470.

To return to our former subject: The whole conception of serving-monads is a very difficult one, and one which Renouvier himself, as it seems to me, has failed to make clear. For the most part they seem to be thought of as constituting in their simplest compounds the molecules of various bodies—for which reason "specific weight" is ascribed to the monadic bodies of the first moment of creation. In fact, M. Renouvier assumes differences from the beginning of his universe, while acknowledging that in "their common indeterminate character as representative powers" the monads are "identical." It is unfair, perhaps, but one wonders which courageous monad at the moment of creation first originated some causal series, thus becoming differentiated itself, and affording a primary difference to the universe—and why and how it did it. At one point, indeed, an attempt is made to differentiate the molecule from the primary monad-compound. As "relative to the mechanical functions," and as the "constituent parts of bodies," molecules are allowed an "incontestible empiric existence," but it is declared that they are "neither monads nor compounds of monads in that sense of organization which will be defined later on." As that sense of organization turns out to be the control exercised by a central monad over the monads of its organism under the law of pre-established harmony, however, and as the character of this control—considering the unitary nature of the individual monad—remains far from clear, the matter is left much as it was before; and the molecule is treated thenceforth as a true monadic compound.[1]

But whether or not liberty of choice has been allowed to the created consciousness by a creative intelligence which did not wish for slaves, it remains true that liberty of choice is only to be conceived of as a prerogative of the relative consciousness. Nor is it a necessary prerogative even of this; since consciousness is only conceivable as relative, and yet no choice is open to the perfect consciousness of God, or, as should be said rather, to His perfect progressive intelligence. Need even the monadic consciousness be endowed with liberty of choice, however?

Necessity *versus* Liberty.

As far as proof goes, according to M. Renouvier's own showing, and accepting his premises, the thesis of necessity is nearly as intelligible as that of liberty, save as the latter is vouched for by consciousness. The points that are taken to determine even the intelligence in favor of freedom are found in the fact that every category must be determiate, *qua* category, since the indedeterminate is that which is not for knowledge, and the categories

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, pp. 53. 55, 475, 11, 4.

are the forms of knowledge; that an infinite regress cannot be taken as determinate, the idea of an actual infinite number contradicting the notion of the category of number, and hence being an impossibility; and that, if appeal be made to experience and the statistical results derived from it, these results rest on the principle of large numbers, which itself presupposes an equal chance of occurrence, or indeterminism.

Now, all of these factors may be said, I think, to be results of the relativity of our knowledge as incomplete individuals. To a consciousness not apart from the universe and aware of the complete interrelation of the universe—aware of it as an object of knowledge and not as a necessary presupposition of knowledge —the causal series would not appear to be infinite, except perhaps as a circle, for instance, is infinite in the sense of having neither beginning nor end. A consciousness not in itself progressive would view the last as the cause of the first and the first of the last; or, rather, there would be no first or last for it, so that the causal series would be complete, and, as complete, expressible in the actual number *one*, all other numbers, as measures of difference, not entering into account. In such a consciousness the categories of cause and number alike would cease to apply after their present fashion, somewhat as M. Renouvier imagines the law of gravitation as altering its character, though not its being, in the world of the first creation. As for the law upon which statistical results are based, it presumes that events, *as far as is known*, have an equal chance of occurrence. That is, being consciously unaware of the exact interrelation of things within the universe, equality of possible occurrence is postulated as a concession to ignorance, while all the time it is known that such an equality is in fact impossible. The progressive consciousness postulates a beginning as necessary in order that experience may be intelligible to it; while a consciousness the form of whose activity was not progressive would know no need either of a beginning or an end. It would *be*, and would not *be becoming*; its liberty would be real, the liberty to be itself, not the liberty to choose which among various alternatives was the truest expression of itself. It is the former liberty, indeed, as we have seen, that M. Renouvier has assigned to his true individual; and to this liberty, it might seem, therefore, the consciousness as a whole would bear witness. It was as a concession to the progressive consciousness and its methods of proceedure that he posited the perfectly progressive consciousness as the cause of the relative; but would a *perfectly* progressive consciousness make progress at all? Would

Relative Freedom an Illusion.

it not simply maintain itself? But enough, for the moment, of this question.

Having assumed the perfect to be the cause of the relative consciousness, M. Renonvier now encountered the problem of evil, and held that it was best explained by the relative liberty of a relative consciousness, even though consciousness was maintained to be undefinable in relative terms. In order that such a liberty might not reduce the world to nought again, he then returned to the concept of creative and created perfection, and found in the notion of preëstablished harmony a means of preserving the unity of his world; while to prevent these concepts of freedom and of harmony from coming into conflict he denied that in a finite universe the effects of any one original cause could be infinite.

The Problem of Evil.

Evil as Relative.

And just what is meant by these terms "finite" and "infinite" as used by M. Renouvier? The finite world of his conception seems to be above all else a world of complete interrelation. In contrast with this idea of the finite, by infinite he means *not capable of complete determination*, not relatable, and so not to be known. By it he means, also, *not capable of complete determination because of having neither beginning nor end*—as when he denies the possibility of an infinite progressive or regressive series—but he does not mean *having neither beginning nor end.* Were an endless series capable of determination it would be finite. "Unrelatable" and "infinite" are synonymous to Renouvier, not "infinite" and "endless"—except indirectly. The completely interrelated finite universe, in its three moments of existence, for instance, has no beginning and no end, save as a creation not in time; and the completely interrelated and so unified consciousness of God *is* simply, and, having neither beginning nor end, is neither created nor creatable. It, too, is not "infinite"; but then it becomes evident that by "finite" is meant not only "completely interrelated" but "perfect." Now what our philosopher says in his discussion of the problem of the fruitfulness of evil is briefly this: Within a finite universe there can be nothing infinite; therefore the effect of any one original finite action within that universe must itself be finite. Which statement, being interpreted, runs as follows: Within a completely interrelated universe there can be nothing unrelated; therefore the effect of any original interrelated action within that universe must itself have an end. I do not see that M. Renouvier's argument proves the finitude of evil in this sense. In a world of complete interrelation the effect of even the most interrelated or finite action could not but include all the relations of the universe for all time, it seems to

L OF C.

me. For that matter, I do not understand how, within such a universe, there could be any original action *in time* at all. All things would have to begin with the beginning and end with the ending of the universe—in all its three moments; and that ending and beginning are confessedly not in time. Every action, of course, would be finite in the sense that the universe itself is finite—it would be a case of complete interrelation; and every action, because it was finite, would be an action of the universe itself rather than an action of any one of its parts. But this is to repeat what M. Renouvier himself insists upon, that original action is always the action of an individual, though it is to deny that there are more individuals than one. That an action cannot be completely determined unless it has a beginning and an end, and that unless completely determined it cannot be finite, is the argument. If I understand Renouvier, however, every action, by virtue of the law of preëstablished harmony, is in complete relation to the universe, and so long as the relation is complete the action would, of course, be finite—the question of a beginning or an end entering into the matter no more than it does into a consideration of the probable nature of the consciousness of God. Anything completely interrelated, and therefore finite, cannot have a beginning or an end. That point of view is necessarily transcended in the notion of complete interrelation. An incomplete relation appears to begin and end—but, then, within this universe no relation is incomplete; it is only apprehended incompletely by us, who are not true individuals. Therefore, if "finite" means "completely relatable" and "infinite" means "not completely relatable," there would seem to be no room among the relations of a finite universe for such an infinite freedom of will as that insisted upon by M. Renouvier—a will able to be an original cause. For an endless and beginningless series would appear infinite, or, indeed, would be known at all only to a consciousness that seemed to itself infinite—that had not grasped the full notion of the complete interrelation of the universe.

Now, the monad was endowed with the power of originating a causal series and of freely choosing between offered alternatives of action only for the sake of solving the problem of the existence of evil within this world of ours: and why, we may ask, was such trouble taken to explain this one among the many problems which a study of the relative consciousness presents to us?

It seems to me that it is because evil is preëminently the oppressive aspect of "otherness" that it has forced itself so strongly upon the attention of each generation of thinkers. We are evil, and yet we regard evil as something apart from us. Our true

selves deny it, we say—and so we have two selves, of which the "other" is evil. Consciousness as a perfect unity would not know evil, though neither, I think, would it know good, save as the individual good of fulfilled desire. And if from the list of desires we strike out all those which are manifestly social in their character, we have left of those which we, being social beings, rank high up in the scale, little more than that desire to know, to understand, for the sake of knowing and understanding, in terms of which it has always been the tendency—or one tendency, rather—to describe the nature of God. "Know thyself," the ancient maxim which summed up the wisdom of the Greeks, seems a not unworthy aim to attribute even to the highest intelligence, and it is possible to conceive of God as an Intelligence at rest in the perfect knowledge of the All which is itself; while "Be thyself," or, still worse, "Love thyself," appears superfluous or ridiculous as applied to the One—the all.

Now, M. Renouvier has undertaken to explain the origin of evil, whether moral or physical, and to afford it a place within the system of the universe; and as there is much physical evil for which, in the present condition of things, man cannot be held by any stretch of the imagination to be responsible, he has placed its origin far back in time beyond the constitution of this present world, and has made it subsidiary to that moral evil the connection of which with consciousness has never been denied. Evil, he says, results from the attempt of any created, unified consciousness to subdue any or all other created consciousnesses to itself—to be, so to speak, the one of many rather than the one among many it was intended to be. Evil, that is, is the result of an illegitimate effort of the single consciousness to realize itself as one, as a unity. Yet a unity each consciousness is, and its effort to know itself as such is perfectly natural, perfectly legitimate—and perfectly hopeless. We are evil because we are not that which it is our nature to be; because there is a difference between actual and potential being; because, apparently, there is more than one being, more than one intelligence, more than one will within the world of our experience.

Is there more than one will within the cosmos, however? At any rate, we may say, the existence of more than one will has not been proved by M. Renouvier. Indeed, as that philosopher would probably protest, he has not undertaken to prove it—for it is unprovable, one of the necessary assumptions on which knowledge rests. But the agreement between reason and reality is as necessary an assumption as that of the plurality of beings, intelligences or wills; and reason persists in presenting itself as

one, as unified—not plural. If the monad is a completely interrelated consciousness—as *per* definition—to attribute to it freedom of choice is absurd, since that would imply a relative incompleteness; while if it is a unit within a completely interrelated universe —as *per* definition, likewise—to attribute to it freedom of choice would be to overthrow the complete interrelation of the universe; and to maintain that there is a completely interrelated universe made up of many separate completely interrelated consciousnesses all possessed of freedom of choice, is to maintain a contradiction, or to give a new meaning to the phrase "*completely* interrelated." Yet if the monad is not to be endowed with freedom of choice, to what are we to attribute the evil in the world?

Evil an Illusion.

Of course, we might say, after the mystic fashion, that evil is at illusion—a necessary aspect of the universe as viewed from the standpoint of the progressive or relative consciousness; a negative thing which never originated because it never was; and to which even the progressive consciousness refuses to allow an ultimate validity. But this is to substitute one difficult problem for another. We should be asked the nature of that validity which is allowed to evil by the progressive consciousness; or, still worse, the nature of the validity allowed to the progressive consciousness itself. For if evil is an illusion, the consciousness which is aware of evil would appear to be an illusion also; and from this conclusion the mind shrinks. A temporary and relative reality has never been denied to the progressive consciousness, a reality of which we think on most occasions as the most real reality of all. Yet since the beginning of philosophic thought the progressive consciousness has been trying to explain itself and its universe, only to decide that as long as it remained itself it could not do so. But in the course of its attempts it has learned, I think, one thing: that the consciousness of its idea is not something apart from itself, but is somehow in and around and through it, although *how* it does not know and has not been able to guess. That it is the ideal consciousness which really exists and is, may surely be said, likewise, for this is a conclusion to which our consciousness is driven back after every fresh attempt at explanation. It has been suggested, indeed, that the universal consciousness is rather of the nature of a mighty will than of a clear intelligence, a blind force moving to it knows not what, or circling in upon itself in an eternal restlessness of being. As has been said, however, even the progressive consciousness appears to be able to transcend this point of view. Or, again, it has been proposed to think of the universe as *becoming*. To think of a universe at all we must think of it as comprehended within some

The Problem of the Real.

consciousness, perhaps; but need we think of that consciousness as itself fully conscious? May we not say—making a distinction which we often draw in relation to the consciousness best known to us—that it is conscious, but not self-conscious, and that it is on its way to attain to the latter state? That the relative consciousness attains to self-consciousness but slowly is an obvious fact. Perhaps the universal consciousness may be thought of as doing likewise; in which case our distracted life of effort and of attainment which is but the base for further effort might be thought of as a part of the universal struggle. A universal consciousness that was at all, however, would have to be thought of as embracing that complete system of relations which, to our minds, makes up the universe. And, surely, among these would have to be included the relations of self-consciousness. Only when the relations of consciousness had attained their completeness in the individual could the universe be thought of as *completely* interrelated, while complete interrelation must, on this view, be supposed a permanent characteristic of the universe. The universe could hardly grow out of its own complete interrelation, and since in this the relations of self-consciousness would have to be included, the universe itself would have to be conceived of as possessing an individual consciousness—*the* individual consciousness, rather; and the part played within it by our pygmy lives—which yet mean much to us—would remain as great a puzzle as ever.

Therefore, whatever hypothesis we may choose to adopt, our being cannot justifiably be conceived of as a being apart from the being of the universe—apart even as the creation is apart from the creator. At least, such is the conclusion to which a study of M. Renouvier's system seems to me to lead. For if the universe is to be a universe at all it must include all things within it, and the only way in which it could include the perfect individual would be that it itself should be the Individual—that the Universe should be God, and God the universe.

But again it will be asked, What of the problem of evil? since it was this problem which Renouvier so boldly attacked with his modification of the ancient hypothesis of a Creative Power and many created consciousnesses, or monads, endowed with a free will. Now, although this hypothesis (like all others yet proposed) involves the mind in contradictory suppositions—suppositions from which not even the expedient of "necessary beliefs" will wholly free it—it is easier to point out defects in the French thinker's system than to suggest how those defects might be remedied, or to form a new system of one's own. No one could

read *La nouvelle monadologie* and fail to be impressed by the immense mass of facts which have been gathered together and thrown more or less into form within the system; neither could he deny the keen insight its author shows into many of our latter-day problems, nor the wisdom of his suggestions concerning them. Moreover, if his premises are accepted, there is no doubt that Renouvier has found a place in his system for evil and its effects. But can one accept those premises? We are told that we must necessarily believe in a many and a one. A one existing through many, or a many existing in one, we might hold to. In these latter cases, however, no explanation of the evil known to the relative consciousness can yet be offered. Not until the nature of the relation existing between the two forms of consciousness has been made clear to us may we hope to understand fully the problem of the relative consciousness. That the particular exists through the universal, the universal in the particular, is still, upon this point, the final word of philosophy; since, for all its centuries of effort, philosophy has not yet found a means of explaining to its own satisfaction in what manner universal and particular are one.

D.

Conclusion.

If, however, we are content to set aside this problem for awhile, and, disregarding the paradoxical character of the notion, look upon the human consciousnese as at once and actually relative and absolute, there is nothing to prevent us from forming and having formed for us a conception of things which shall serve us as a guide to live by and as an instrument for the attainment of further knowledge: even though we recognize that our guide, like Dante's Virgil, must turn back before all the journey is done, and that our instrument is imperfect in itself, and employed but for want of a better.

The Human Ideal.

As we have seen, our consciousness cannot be defined as merely relative; its nature is to attain to something; but, that thing once gained, it does not long rest content, but makes its gain a base for further attainment. The different ends it thus proposes for itself are its different ideals; and these, too, according to the constant nature of its activity, it endeavors to form into a system by means of a scale of values, which, for the most part, society furnishes to it ready-made. For these ends of ours are not pursued in succession merely, but, as it were, all at once, so that they must needs be systematized in order that we may know, in the not uncommon cases where our ideals come in conflict, which of the opponents should yield, and which of all these ideals is to be reckoned the most ultimate.

M. Renouvier's discussion of this question is especially valuable, and forms, indeed, the most interesting part of *La nouvelle monadologie.* He finds the final ideal to be that of justice, and justice he interprets as social welfare (*le bien social*), of which the most important element, perhaps, is that of equality of opportunity. The welfare of his idea is not an economic gain, however. Indeed, he deems no words too hard to use in denunciation of that "economic optimism" characteristic of so many of our modern thinkers. "The end of society is the individual as just,

The Ideal as Justice.

not as comfortable," he declares (although he finds it necessary to posit these two ends as united in the first and third moments of creation). And again, in another connection (and in disgust) he remarks that "social welfare, which is eminently justice, is not only not posited in general thought as the human ideal *par excellence*, but glory is substituted for it, even by the historians."[1] Social welfare is justice, justice is social welfare, but the determination of the content of this ideal must be left, for the most part, to the enlightened conscience of the individual, says M. Renouvier.

The Ideal as Truth.

The human ideal, then, it will be seen, is regarded by the leader of the neo-critical school, as by most thinkers who look upon the consciousness as essentially relative, as an ideal of conduct. Nor, as it seems to me, can the truth of this ideal be denied—for the progressive consciousness. The ideal of justice may well be taken as the guiding idea of our lives; but that it is the final thinkable ideal is not so sure. After all, our consciousness is universal in its nature—potentially universal, rather, if one prefers to state it thus—and to be potentially implies the possibility of fulfilling that being. We are not apart from God, and so for us, also, it may be, the highest ideal of which we may conceive is that of truth.

[1] *La nouvelle monadologie*, p. 381.

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